SOCIAL LIFE IN GERMANY,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

EXPLANATORY OF

THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND MANNERS.

BY MRS. JAMESON,

AUTHOR OF 'VISITS AND SKETCHES AT HOME AND ABROAD,'
"CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN," &c

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & CO., SOHO SQUARE.

1847.

CONTENTS

OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

AN INTRODUCTORY DIALOGUE

CONCERNING THESE DRAMAS, THE PRINCESS AMELIA OF SAXONY, AND A VARIETY OF MATTERS THERETO APPERTAINING.

ALDA—MEDON.

MEDON.

No! I remain unconvinced. I still think that translation is not your *forte:* and if it were, I think there are many German works much more in harmony with the English taste, and—I speak it with all respect for your Princess Amelia—better worth translating than these Dramas, which I have not read, 'tis true; but, whatever

be their merit, you would not, I presume, rank them with the first-rate or classical literature of Germany?

ALDA.

Assuredly not.

MEDON.

Nor equal them with many works which have even very lately proceeded from the German press, which, if well translated, as I have heard you assert yourself, would make a rich addition to the mass of thought and information in this country?

ALDA.

No: but you must bear in mind the particular purpose I had in view. English readers, English travellers, even English critics, had been, in some degree, interested by the very slight and imperfect sketches of German life and literature scattered through my little books. Now it happened that, when these comedies came under my notice, I was just looking round for some vehicle through

which I might hope to convey a more detailed and finished picture of the actual state of society in a country which I have learned to love as my own. You will allow that we know little of it, and do not understand what we know, and still less sympathise with what we understand?

MEDON.

I allow it; but why not do what has been so often suggested to you—write a novel, and place the scene in Germany? You laugh!

ALDA.

Yes, I laugh at the idea of my writing a novel. I could not do it any more than I could paint a picture. A work of fiction, such as I conceive it ought to be, requires genius, a power of creating and combining, which I have not. "Let not the cobbler go beyond his last!" Leave me my own trade, to work with my own tools and materials, nor tempt me into a career, already crowded with brilliant names, where, not to work up to my own idea of excellence, were to

me the worst of failures. The study and appreciation of character, and motives, and feelings, for which you and others give me credit, would no more enable me to invent a good fiction, than my perception and passionate love of the great and beautiful in art would enable me to paint a fine picture.

MEDON.

I see; but since you *will* try your hand at translating, and with a particular purpose, why not translate some of the exquisite fictions and philosophical novels of the modern German school?—it presents a wide and fair field for choice both of authors and subjects.

ALDA.

It does so; many of these works have singular merit, and contain interesting matter for speculation in regard to the direction of the German mind in these days; but, besides that I would not take upon myself to propagate, through the medium of my own language, sentiments or

principles which I do not quite approve—views of the sanity of which I could not feel sure,—none of these works which fell in my way struck me by their aptitude for my purpose. For the style in which they are written our English taste is either not ripe, or, it may be, too ripe—shall I say—even to morbidity? or they do not reflect, in one graceful and comprehensive picture, the actual state of manners, and the nicer shades of national and individual character: and these were what I required.

MEDON.

You think these are best represented in the dramatic form? I doubt it. You exclude reflection, description, analysis: you give us surface merely—results, not causes.

ALDA.

Yet consider this: In the most celebrated of those narratives, biographies, autobiographies, be they fictitious or otherwise, which portray common life, are not the best portions—those

which convey the most direct and lively impression of the truth of character—thrown into the dialogue form, which is *good* just in proportion as it is *dramatic?*

MEDON.

And it is your deliberate opinion, that these dramas, as pictures of manners and portraits of character, are calculated to please the English taste?

ALDA.

I think—I *hope*—that, for many reasons besides their own merit, they will interest some English readers: that they will please the English taste generally, is more than doubtful. A few years ago—even five years ago—I would not have ventured to give this translation to the public.

MEDON.

For fear of the public? or for fear of critics—such as——

ALDA.

O never mind names! Even such critics as you allude to, have changed their tactics of late. The general tone of criticism in England is much elevated and enlarged, even within a very few years. There existed, there still exists, in some degree, one strong distinction between the spirit of German and the spirit of English criticism: the Germans have deep sympathy, honest appreciation for what is most opposite to their own national nature and habits of life, united with a singular degree of nationality and individuality of character. Their very independence, in this sense, is the cause of their indulgence and universal spirit. The English critics, on the contrary, were long infected with the exclusive spirit which, in its excess, we thought so ridiculous in the old French school. Whatever was foreign to our own mode of existence was misunderstood; whatever was not within the circle of our experience was worthless; whatever

was beyond the customary sphere of our observation and interests, trivial or even vulgar. Has not Werter's Charlotte cutting bread and butter served as a perpetual jest? But all this is passing away. This intolerant and exclusive spirit of criticism would now be contemned and disavowed by any newspaper reviewer. Nay, in another half century I should not wonder if Jean Paul became the fashion:—you shake your head?

MEDON.

Not to look forward *quite* so far, do you not foresee that if the personages of these dramas represent genuine Germans in act and speech——

ALDA.

They will be thought very *un*-English? Exactly so. It is because these dramas are so essentially German in spirit and in style, that I have translated them with such close fidelity to

the spirit, and such an almost literal adherence to the style. In this, as it appears to me, lies their true interest, their real value.

MEDON.

And, meantime, if it displease the English taste—— ?

ALDA.

I make it here not a question of taste, but of curiosity and information. The question, methinks, is not how should men and women behave and express themselves in England, but how is daily homely life arrayed in Germany? what appearance does it put on?—in what do their manner and modes of expression differ from ours? And when we have taken this in at one rapid glance, we may reflect on it at leisure—go deeper, and amuse ourselves with tracing to their source the differences and affinities in national manners. And we may also ask how it is, and why it is, that dramas so popular in Germany, so unaffected, so elegant, so refined, would be

insufferable, or at least ineffective, on the English stage?—a question not speedily nor easily answered!

MEDON.

You tell me that these productions are more remarkable for the delineation of character and manner than for effect and situation; but that which renders them unfit for our theatre may render them better worth perusal. It were difficult to make an English audience sit out, during four or five long acts, the gradual development of a character; we require on the stage the mere exhibition of passion and situation; how certain passions and certain situations act upon individual character and call it forth, is not the question. You will find, generally, in the most successful of our modern plays, a series of striking scenes, instead of a regular well-constructed plot, cohering in all its parts; and representations of passions, of which we may say that, like the winds, we know not whence they come, nor whither they go.

ALDA.

But this, as it seems to me, is not the fault of the public.

MEDON.

The fault, then, of our dramatists?

ALDA.

Hardly theirs, for in the present state of things it appears to me that they are placed under the necessity of writing for certain actors —not for an audience, still less for a public. But, I beseech you, when you read these dramas, let it be without reference to actors or audiences —English tastes, or English manners. Take them as what they are. The Princess Amelia wrote them for the German stage—the German people —her own people: you must not try them by the present state of our English stage.

MEDON.

It is an experiment—a hazardous one.

ALDA.

I will abide the issue. Is it very, *very* unreasonable to hope that what has so charmed me in these comedies, their unexceptionable moral tone, their exceeding elegance and unexaggerated truth, their earnestness of purpose, that something, warm from the heart, beyond the flight of eloquence or the play of wit, will charm others too? And then I wished to give a sample of what has pleased a cultivated people through all grades of society from highest to lowest—even "in these most brisk and giddy-paced times," these days of operas, politics, and vaudevilles; and then—I had another motive.

MEDON.

No doubt you had — woman like!—two or three motives lying *perdus* behind the ostensible one.

ALDA.

None which I wish to conceal. The origin of these dramas is so remarkable, that had their

merit been less, I think I should still have been tempted to try the new vocation of translator, for the purpose of introducing them to the English public.

MEDON.

I allow it to be most remarkable, and will confess that it excited my attention and curiosity, before I knew anything of these plays or their writer but from report. Among the signs of the times, and they are many and various——

ALDA

Taking now and then, and here and there, rather startling forms!

MEDON.

Not one of the least startling, nor the least hopeful and interesting to a speculative mind, is the appearance of these dramas in a continued series at the German theatres. The pretensions of princess royal, and of a professed and successful writer for the stage and for the peo-

ple, assuredly were never before combined in tale or history. There was indeed an Electress of Saxony who composed operas——*

ALDA.

Yes: the grandmother of my Princess Amelia, and a woman of real genius,—a born artist; but here are pretensions of quite a different order. Here is a princess of one of the proudest and most ancient of the sovereign houses of Europe, the sister of a reigning king, one hedged round from infancy by an almost impassable barrier of court etiquette, and in mind, manners, and appearance, a most feminine and unassuming creature, who suddenly steps forward in a department of literature the most arduous in itself, the farthest removed from her position in

* In alluding to the literary accomplishments of the reigning family, it should not be omitted that the present King of Saxony, brother of the Princess Amelia, published, when Crown Prince, a work on Botany and Mineralogy; and that the Princess's younger brother, Prince John, has translated Dante into German verse, of which the first part, containing the *Inferno*, appeared a few months since, and the second part is, I am informed, on the eve of publication, (1840).

society, and her sphere of observation and experience—the drama of actual common life:—grant that till now it is a thing unheard of?

MEDON.

Granted!—but grant also, that this princess-playwright may owe some part of her popularity to her very high rank—high enough to dazzle criticism into absolute blindness.

ALDA.

Possibly; but she had attained a high degree of popularity before her real name and rank were even surmised. What makes it all yet more *piquant*, is the fact, that at her own theatre, the court theatre of Dresden, her first drama was rejected, and never performed, till its success at Berlin and Hamburg had given it the stamp of public approbation,—so little was the real authorship suspected. And if you allow the origin of these plays to be at least remarkable, not less remarkable are the means by which the public favour has been won and kept. Without

the exhibition of romantic incident or tumultuous distress; with little of passion or poetry, without the usual witty surprises and disguises, without any appeal to the passing interests or topics of the day: merely by adhering to the truth of nature, to the affections and events of daily life, and clothing simple, genuine feeling in easy and elegant language, this extraordinary woman has achieved a great triumph for herself and her sex, and has really conferred a benefit on the community, by the moral lessons she has conveyed, the pure sympathies she has awakened through the enchanting vehicle of scenic illusion.

MEDON.

Do not forget that it is without any such enchanting scenic illusion you are now presenting these productions to the public;—on the contrary, in all the stiffness of a close translation: in short, be not too sanguine in behalf of your Princess.

ALDA.

I will not; yet must I respect her for the good she has done, and think it honour to be the means of making her farther known. In this kind of spiritual influence, however and wherever exercised, be it in a larger or a smaller circle, lies the true vocation, the undisputed empire, of the intellectual woman; not in any of those political powers and privileges which have been demanded for us by eloquent pens and "most sweet voices," but which every woman who has looked long upon life, and well considered her own nature, and the purposes for which she came into the world, would at once abjure, if offered.

MEDON.

Even though it were true ("and pity 'tis were if true") that "the love of pleasure, and the love of sway," divided between them the whole female heart—the whole female world—still, methinks, the possession of any executive powers and

privileges would be poor enjoyment, most paltry empire, compared with that which, moving in meekness along your appointed path, you women are called to exercise—I will not say *over* the world, but in the world, and for the good of society.

ALDA.

I agree with you.

MEDON.

And yet you are supposed to be an advocate for the (so called) *emancipation of woman?*

ALDA.

It is a phrase which never escaped my pen, nor my lips—unless to ask its meaning; for it seems to bear a different signification wherever I have heard it in France, Germany, and England. Emancipation from what?—from the high duties to which we are born, or from the virtues on which the whole frame of social life may be said to rest, and in which alone there is hope of a better order of things? God forbid!—nay, he

has forbidden it by a law not to be gainsaid—stronger than all conventional laws—the law of Nature herself!

MEDON.

Still, though I dislike the phrase for the ridicu-lous use which has been made of it on all sides—I could wish to see the EMANCIPATION OF WOMAN from the despotism of opinion, and her mind and conduct under some higher guidance than the fear of censure and the fear of shame. Men—that is, shallow and thoughtless men—depend on this early inculcated *fear* as their best se-curity for the subservience and the moral conduct of woman, and dread to see a loftier principle, a higher responsibility, substituted in its stead.

"*He* for God only—*she* for God in him,"

has been often quoted; it sounds fine; and for my own part, and speaking as a man, I should not object to the principle, if I could claim for my own sex absolute infallibility, though only so far as regards women: otherwise, that the

man, erring and responsible, should in any way stand between the woman and her responsibility as an immortal and rational being to the great God of both, seems to me a most profane assumption on the poet's part, though that poet were Milton. Another poet has been more just to you.

"Thrice happy she, that is so well assur'd
Unto herself, and settled so in heart,
That neither will for better be allur'd,
Nor feared with worse of any chance to start;
But, like a steady ship, doth strongly part
The raging waves, and bear her course aright.
Ne aught for tempest doth from it depart,
Ne aught for fairer weather's false delight.
Such self-assurance need not fear the spite
Of grudging foes, nor favour seek of friends;
But, in the stay of her own stedfast might,
Neither to one nor to the other bends.
Most happy she, that so assured doth rest,
But he most happy who such one loves best!*

ALDA.

Most happy—did he but know his bliss!

* Spenser.

MEDON.

You smile *significantly;* but rest assured, that more men than you are aware of, think on this point as you do—nay, are inclined to carry the principle much farther than you would venture to carry it.

ALDA.

And thereby do us much mischief. My good friend, I appeal from such advocacy, and from your two poets—from him who saw in us the subservient toy, and him who would have translated us into poetical divinities, to the gospel law: *that* has emancipated us religiously and morally speaking. Emancipation from such trammels and disabilities, be they legal or conventional, as are manifestly injurious—shutting us out from honourable redress where we are oppressed, and from the means of honest subsistence where we are destitute—we shall work out for ourselves in due time, or win it from public opinion. Meantime be it permitted to a wo-

man hopefully to anticipate, and gently to promote, such a consummation, without being subjected to imputations or insinuations, such as make the whole womanly nature shrink back in terror and disgust.

MEDON.

Surely—but meantime take care that you be not misunderstood. To confound together the social duties of the two sexes, is surely a most dangerous and a most absurd mistake—and this is the point at issue.

ALDA.

My astonishment is, that it could ever have been mooted: it never *had* been, were woman in her natural position.

MEDON.

And what do you call her *natural* position?

ALDA.

She is the helpmate of man. The squaw who

bears her husband's hunting tackle, and cooks his meal, is in her natural position, relatively to the state of society in which she lives. So was Madame Roland, when she acted as her husband's secretary, wrote for him, spoke for him, and died for him.

MEDON.

Then, whatever man may do, woman may do?

ALDA.

Can she?—but it is not a question—she cannot!—you cannot overcome organic differences. My profession of faith, since you call for it, may be summed up in few words. I believe that men and women were created *one* in species; equally rational beings with improvable faculties; equally responsible to God for the use or abuse of the faculties entrusted to them; equally free to choose the good, and refuse the evil; equally destined to an equal immortality.

MEDON.

All this I devoutly believe.

ALDA.

Well then, this being granted, I do not see that the divine gospel law under which we live makes any distinction in the amount of virtue, purity of heart and person, and self-control required in the two sexes. Do you admit this?

MEDON.

I must admit it: (*aside*) in theory!

ALDA.

Then, as a consequence, will you not admit that any merely conventional law which permits or creates inequality in this respect, must be productive of gross injustice and mutual depravation; and that if woman *could* resist it—she were right to do so?

MEDON.

If she could——

ALDA.

She *would*, believe me! But to proceed: this christian principle of the moral equality of the two sexes being fully recognised, then it appears to me that the ordering of domestic life is *our* sacred province, indissolubly linked with the privileges and pleasures as well as the pains and duties of maternity; that it is our vocation, in the real and in the figurative sense, to keep the fire burning pure and clear on the domestic hearth; and that the exclusive management of the executive affairs of the community at large belongs to men, as the natural result of their exemption from those duties and infirmities which the maternal organisation has entailed on the female half of the creation.

MEDON.

Your theory, like that of the writer of "Woman's Mission," supposes all women to be mothers, or to have a home—and this is not the fact.

ALDA.

That it is not the fact, is a consideration which would lead us to the source of many contradictions and disorders. But you have had my theory; the practical part of the question would lead us too far at present—another time—

MEDON.

When you please: meantime return we to your Princess. The salique law, I believe, prevails in the Saxon constitution,* and the Princess Amelia, the eldest daughter of her father's house, had she been the sole daughter of her father's house, could never have sat on the throne of her ancestors; but what a far higher and more extended empire is hers!

ALDA.

Yes—it is the enchanter's wand compared to the constable's staff.

* The law of succession in Saxony does not absolutely exclude a female sovereign, but no female can succeed as long as there is a male heir of either line (the Albertine or Ernestine) surviving.

MEDON.

But what upon earth put it into the head of a princess to write plays?

ALDA.

A question to be asked!

MEDON.

And not to be answered?

ALDA.

I am not sure that I can answer it satisfactorily, and mere conjecture were here impertinence. The few particulars I learned from her Royal Highness herself, and gathered from other trust-worthy sources, you shall have. To begin at the beginning;—the Princess Amelia, or, according to the veracious *Almanac de Gotha*, Amelia-Maria-Frederica-Augusta, Duchess and Princess of Saxony, was born in 1794. Her father Prince Maximilian, was the youngest of the three sons of the Elector Frederic Christian.

His eldest brother, Frederic-Augustus, elector, and, in 1806, king, ruled Saxony for sixty-four years, from 1763 to 1827. His fate and fortunes were so mingled with the history of Napoleon, and with all the great political vicissitudes springing out of the revolutionary war, that I presume you know a great deal more about him than I do—not pluming myself on the extent of my historical and chronological lore. He appears to have been in some respects an admirable prince, and remembered with gratitude for the improvements he made in the laws and finances of his country.

MEDON.

I have always admired Frederic Augustus for the stanch fidelity with which, having once allied himself with Napoleon, he adhered to him through good and evil fortune, almost to the last moment of his political existence—at least, until absolved from all bond of obligation by Napoleon himself after the battle of Leipzic.

ALDA.

He seems to have had a sound and a true heart within him, towards his people and towards his friends: to him, I believe, belongs the credit of having founded the present commercial prosperity of Saxony. His youngest brother, Prince Max, the father of our Princess Amelia, does not appear to have mingled much in politics, but to have been deeply attached to his brother, whose fortunes he shared and followed. He was described to me as a most amiable and accomplished man, and happy in his union with Caroline, Princess of Parma, with whom he lived a retired and domestic life, in the bosom of his family. His wife died in 1804, leaving several children. The Princess Amelia, then ten years old, was educated by her two aunts, the Queen Maria Amelia and the Princess Maria Theresa,* wife of her uncle Antony, both distinguished women. The etiquette of the court of Saxony was exceedingly minute and severe. The princesses were brought up in

* Daughter of the Emperor Leopold II.

strict seclusion. "Their foot," as the song says, "might never touch the ground;" and I have heard that one of them, when these punctilious disabilities were removed, made it her first request to be allowed to cross on foot the beautiful bridge over the Elbe on which she had looked daily from her palace window for twenty years of her life. Had the old order of things gone on in the old orderly way, I cannot conceive the possibility of a Saxon princess becoming a writer for the public stage: but the world-convulsion had begun before the birth of the Princess Amelia, and, by the time she was twelve years old, it had shaken to their very foundations the thrones, powers, and princedoms of Germany. Old grandeurs sat lamenting, and cut but a sorry figure, and old forms became as old rags.

MEDON.

And what is more, all the patching and bedizening they have had since, does not seem to have entirely restored them to public respect.

ALDA.

From this time till 1815, the Princess Amelia shared in all the vicissitudes of her family: saw her uncle-king twice exiled from his estates, and twice restored, a prisoner—and again on his throne; and during these chances, and changes and reverses, which occurred during the most momentous period of a woman's life, from the age of twelve to that of three-and-twenty, what Amelia of Saxony, with all her good and rare gifts of nature, her quick perceptions and quick sympathies, might be feeling and thinking and suffering and learning, we have no means of ascertaining; only the result is before us, and it is most remarkable. Would not any one have imagined that the tremendous drama played before her eyes, the sound of battle-thunder in her ears, would have given a high poetical turn to her mind—inspired gorgeous themes of tragedy, wondrous and pitiful?

A kingdom for a stage—princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene?——

No such thing! Borne on the surface of that great wave which had wrecked and overwhelmed empires, she was floated, as it were, into quite another hemisphere—the new world of real and popular life; awakening far more curiosity, sympathy, and interest, than the game of war and ambition played by her equals around her. What opportunities were granted to study variety of scenes and variety of characters—"to grapple with real nature"—to extend on every side her sphere of observation, at an age when the fresh youthful mind was warm to every impression, were not then lost—were, on the contrary, put to most profitable use, though, perhaps, unconsciously. From their retreat at Prague, she returned with her family, in 1815, to inhabit the palace of her ancestors at Dresden—a very different being, I imagine, from what she would have been had she never left it; yet—no, I correct myself—not different in *being*, but different in *working*. The nature would have been there—the power; but would it ever have received the current stamp of authenticity, which only act

and performance could give it?—that is the point.

MEDON.

And a very doubtful point! If "many a gem of purest ray serene" lie hidden in dark unfathomable depths of poverty and misery, many a flower, born to diffuse fragrance and blessedness through God's world, droops faint, or runs rank in the confined atmosphere of a court, or in some similar hotbed, where light and heat (which are truth and love) are admitted by measure. It were to be wished that the two extremes of society could be a little more just to each other; while you shall hear the vulgar great wondering and speculating over genius and refinement in a Ploughman Poet and a Corn Law Rhymer, you shall see the vulgar little, incredulous of the human sympathies, the tender yearnings, the brilliant though often unemployed capacities of those lifted above their sordid wants and cares: yet are they all one brotherhood and sisterhood: ay, "one touch of nature makes the

whole world kin!" Many a genius rests mute and inglorious within a trophied vault as well as in a village churchyard, equally stifled and smothered up by impediments and obstructions infinite. I should adore your Princess Amelia, if it were only for giving us a proof of this great truth. How came this Princess, for example, to be the first of her sex who stepped forth from the recesses of her palace to be judged by her people at the common bar of public criticism? In others of her class, the same or some corresponding power may have existed; but where got she, the courage to manifest it in a country still under the influence of the old system of etiquettes and usages? Would she have had this courage, think you, while her uncle Frederic Augustus lived?

ALDA.

If my impression of his character be just, he would never have permitted such an infraction of all royal rule of right, and she would never have disobeyed him. Her two brothers, the

present king and the accomplished and liberal-minded Prince John, have grown up under a different order of things: to their sister's literary efforts they have not only given their sanction, but their approving sympathy also. After the restoration of the royal family, the Princess Amelia accompanied her father, Prince Max, to Italy, one of her younger sisters, the Princess Maria, having married in 1817 the present Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany, and another of her sisters, the Princess Louisa, having married his father, the late Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany, in 1821; in 1819, her younger sister, Josepha, married Ferdinand VII. of Spain. It was said that Ferdinand had first offered his hand to the Princess Amelia, and that she declined it, as she has invariably rejected every proposal of the same kind. She paid a visit to her sister in Spain, in company with her father, in 1824, and remained there some months. She also visited France, but was never, I believe, in England. In 1827, her uncle, King Frederic Augustus, died, leaving a daughter only,

(the Princess Augusta,) and was succeeded by his brother Anthony, a good-natured but weak and superstitious old man, who had no children, and was exceedingly attached to the Princess Amelia. I have been told that the manner in which she used her influence over him endeared her not only to the court, but to the people. Then, in 1830, occurred the revolution which changed the government of Saxony from a despotism to a limited monarchy, with an upper and lower house of assembly: at the same time, Prince Max, the next heir, resigned his claims in favour of his son, Frederic, who took the reins of government with the title of Crown Prince and Co-regent of Saxony. King Anthony died in 1836. Good old Prince Max, whose health had long been failing, lived from this time in complete seclusion, and we hear no more of him till his death, which occurred about two years since.

These circumstances, already well known to you, I have thrown together briefly, and under one point of view, that you might form a picture

in your own mind of the relation in which Princess Amelia stood to the events and personages around her—the circle in which she moved, lived, and *worked*, silently, as it should seem, for a long while at least. To all appearance, she was passing her time much as usual, dividing her year between Dresden and the beautiful summer palace of Pillnitz on the banks of the Elbe; —when, in 1833, she sent her drama of "Lüge und Wahrheit," (Falsehood and Truth,) to the principal theatre (the *Hof-Theatre*) at Berlin, under the name of Amelia Heiter. Not the slightest suspicion seems to have been entertained of the real name and rank of the authoress, and it remained unnoticed till February 1834. On the birthday of the young Princess of Mecklenberg, (a daughter of the king of Prussia,) it was got up at the private theatre of the *Prinzessinnen-Pallast*, apparently because they had nothing else ready for the occasion; it pleased a royal and courtly audience, was immediately produced publicly at the Hof Theatre at Berlin with complete success, and soon after-

wards upon every stage in Germany. I have translated it, not because it is by any means one of the best of the Princess's plays, but being the first, and one of the most generally-popular, it shows what could excite so much attention at that time. It is very elegantly conceived and written, yet I am afraid that when you read it, you will say, as poor Marie Antoinette said of one of Florian's novels: "Il me semble que je mange de la soupe-au-lait!"

MEDON.

And is it possible that, without any striking novelty or merit, and the name of the authoress as yet unknown, its appearance formed an epoch in the history of the German stage?—for, as I have heard, this was really the case.

ALDA.

There is exaggeration in this view of the matter, but some truth also. Not this first play, but the four or five dramas which succeeded each other rapidly within the space of two years, may

be said, from the effect they produced, to form a sort of epoch; and to understand this, it is necessary to go back to the period at which they first appeared. The German stage was then in a miserable state, overrun (like our own) with versions of Scribe and adaptations of French vaudevilles, French melodramatic horrors, imitated from Victor Hugo and Damas, and French operas of Auber, and nowhere so completely Frenchified as at Berlin.

MEDON.

As if the national drama of Germany was destined to sink again into the abyss from which it had but so lately emerged, and one short half century were to witness its rise, its transcendent grandeur, and its decay! It is curious, that at the time when France and England both possessed a national theatre and national dramatists, Germany should have had neither the one nor the other. I have read somewhere, that the first dramatic representations were solemn, bombastic translations, or rather caricatures of the French

tragedy of Louis the Fourteenth's time. When was it that the *Hanswurst*, the clown, or Vice of the old barbarous comedy, till then the indispensable accompaniment to all stage entertainments, was burned in effigy by a procession of poets and actors at Leipsig?

ALDA.

Somewhere about 1760, at the very time when Garrick was playing Lear and Othello, and Ranger and Don Felix, to English audiences! there was a woman, Johanna Neuber, at this period manager and director of the best theatrical company in Germany, who assisted at this ceremony, in conjunction with Gottsched and Lessing, and had very considerable influence in introducing a higher tone and more natural taste into the dramatic exhibitions of her time; but, as yet, anything like a national drama did not exist; it began with Lessing, who first turned the attention of his countrymen from the stilted productions of the French school of tragedy to the great creations of Shakspeare.

MEDON.

And this despite old Frederic the Great and his ally Voltaire! If at this time Frederic could have put an extinguisher on Shakspeare, and *snuffed out* Goethe, he would. The very language of Germany, as a vehicle of literature, was then held in profoundest contempt.

ALDA.

An old lady who had lived in the court of Frederic the Great, told me that she well recollected being invited to a soirée given by Prince Henry of Prussia, who had been with infinite difficulty persuaded to allow a translation of Voltaire's Mahomet into German verse to be read aloud. The translation was by a young poet of the name of GOETHE, and she humorously imitated the contemptuous impatience of Prince Henry, and the air with which he took snuff and pronounced it "Not so very bad!" But our argument is not now the grand tragic and classical drama of Germany, her Goethes,

Schillers, &c.; but what is termed the *Bürgerliche*, or domestic drama, of which Lessing gave the first example, and which was carried to the highest degree of excellence by Schröder and Iffland. Those who would form a correct idea of the manners and habits of German social life, towards the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, should read the works of Iffland. They present a gallery of portraits from the life; and though now old-fashioned in point of costume and character, and voted *ennuyeux* to the highest degree, a few keep possession of the stage, and are occasionally given. These *Familien-Gemälde* (family pictures) became the rage; the facility and invention and popularity of Kotzebue assisted in keeping up the fashion, which degenerated into the most vapid washy sentiment, and infected at one time both the French and English stage. But this, too, wore itself out, and produced a reaction of a strange kind; the rage was then for Fate tragedies, (*Schicksal Tragödie*,) such as Grillparzer's *Ahnfrau*, and Müllner's *Schuld*, gloomy, ro-

mantic, supernatural, and unnatural. "Germany," as Carlyle says so quaintly, "had its fate-dramatists, just as we have our gingham-weavers and inkle-weavers." Nay, this fate-machinery descended even to homely life, and the stage exhibited millers' daughters, farmers' wives, and gamekeepers' sons, victims, like the race of Atreus, to a dark o'erruling destiny. As for the Bürgerliche comedy, it had almost ceased to exist: and instead of it the "Wienerstücke," (Vienna pieces,) for so the Germans call the romantic and grotesque allegories (admirable in their way) of Ferdinand Raimund, were played from one end of Germany to the other, alternately with operas, French vaudevilles, and "Ritterstücke," or chivalry pieces.

MEDON.

If such was the state of things when the Princess Amelia produced her first drama, no wonder that even *soupe-au-lait* was felt as some relief.

ALDA.

Writers who had been popular, even most deservedly popular, had, by adapting themselves to the taste of the public, lowered themselves in the opinion of the public—a natural consequence! I will just mention two or three writers for the people who were in possession of the German stage at the time when the Princess Amelia began her dramatic career. There was Raupach, one of the most prolific of playwrights, chiefly known, however, as a manufacturer of historical tragedies in a sort of wholesale fashion;* but also the author of some very popular comedies and farces, good in their way, and German, too, in spirit and character. Johanna von Weissenthurm of Vienna, formerly an actress, has been for many years a popular writer for the theatre. Her works fill twelve or four-

* Dr. Raupach has written the whole history of the Hohenstauffen Dynasty in a series of tragedies, filling eight volumes. His dramatic works altogether fill twenty-two volumes.

teen, volumes, and some of them are what we call stock-pieces—keeping possession of the public favour: they seem, however, rather remarkable for easy and elegant dialogue and lively plot, than for variety and discrimination of character. Another lady, Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer, I found popular as a writer of *Effect-Stücke* (pieces of effect) for the people. She is not remarkable for her literary pretensions, nor for knowledge of character or originality of invention; but for knowledge of stage effect, and a power of seizing on the popular imagination, almost unrivalled. In this style was her drama of "Güttenberg," where she gave, in a series of tableaux, the life and fortunes of the famous inventor of printing. This drama, stuffed full of love, piety, and protestantism, had a great *run*, as it is called, in Germany. I saw it frequently, and if *ennuyée* to death by the piece itself, I was always interested by the interest it excited. I remember seeing it well performed at Dresden, where, I pray you to observe, the

d 2

theatre belongs to the court, and the court is Roman Catholic.

MEDON.

Yet Saxony is Protestant surely, though I do not exactly recollect what proportion the Roman Catholics bear to the Protestants in that country; I believe it is very small.

ALDA.

When I was last in Saxony, the census gave, in round numbers, a population of one million five hundred thousand Protestants, and fifty thousand Catholics. In truth, the present state of Saxony, with regard to church arrangements, must appear, especially at this time, almost incomprehensible, if not absolutely incredible to many well-meaning people of our own country. From the period when the Saxon princes were the distinguished proselytes and protectors of Luther, the electoral family professed the reformed faith until the reign of Augustus II. That profligate

monarch, as you may remember, turned Roman Catholic in order to obtain the crown of Poland; but it was so well understood to be a mere political expedient, that his Saxon subjects took it very quietly; and his eldest son was educated a Protestant, (for which our Queen Anne wrote the Elector a letter of compliments and thanks;) but the young prince returned from his tour in Italy a zealous Catholic, and the reigning family have ever since held the same faith.* This anomalous state of things has now lasted more than a century without the least jealousy, or any disturbance whatever, on account of religion, between the princes and the people. The royal family is Catholic; the court mostly Catholic; the government and ministry Protestant; the nation Protestant, and proud that their country was the birthplace of Luther, the cradle of the reformed faith; but not the less affectionately attached to their princes—nay, justly proud of them, as being distinguished by unblemished moral character,

* The three branches of the elder Saxon line, Saxe Weimar, Saxe Coburg, and Saxe Meiningen, remain stanch Protestants.

liberal, enlightened patriotism, and general accomplishments, among the reigning houses of Europe. When I saw the play of Güttenberg at Dresden, old King Anthony was, of course, absent from his usual seat in the front of the royal box. He might have been, for aught I know, and for aught his subjects seemed to care, telling his beads in his Roman Catholic chapel, while the audience, open-mouthed, were listening to the most passionate appeals to their Protestant feelings, and the most exaggerated pictures of papal turpitude. Madame Birch-Pfeiffer has represented the German artisan and mechanic as a kind of religious martyr and missionary, as having invented printing solely as a means of propagating the scriptures among the poor and ignorant, consequently persecuted by hard-hearted priests, and protected by tender women. I do not clearly recollect either plot or catastrophe, but in the last scene Güttenberg comes forward to the very stage-lights, with a large Bible in his hand, and makes a speech, which, if delivered in a church instead of a profane theatre,

would have been called a sermon, and produced, I think, quite the same effect, if one might trust to the solemn, serious, and well-satisfied looks of the audience. Bauernfeld of Vienna (he will not thank me for naming him after the Birch-Pfeiffer) is a writer of light and elegant comedy, who takes a high rank in Germany I have seen some charming pieces of his; but he, discouraged by the tracasseries of the Burg Theatre, and unable to give full scope to his real genius, seemed at this time to have resigned himself to write for the day, and for the powers that be. To give you an idea of the rank assigned to the Princess among the dramatic authors of the time, that is, about two years after the appearance of her first drama, I shall read you, in English, a sample of contemporary criticism. I know not the name of the writer, but he is evidently a man of talent, belonging, as I suppose from the general tenor of his book, to the ultra-liberals of Germany—a very radical, if not one of the *Junge-Deutschland*; and so far from being inclined to pay homage to the

authoress on account of her lofty rank, he does not even name her by her conventional title. Here is the passage. After deploring the state of the German stage, as given over to "a sick Melpomene and a melancholy Thalia," he proceeds to describe what the genuine familiar comedy ought to be, as a reflection of the prevailing tone of manners and of general civilisation, as well as a portraiture of individual character; in short, as the representation of man in a threefold point of view; as the sentient being; as the reasoning being; and as the civilised social being, having relation to other feeling, reasoning, social beings like himself;—he then goes on, "It is here that Bauernfeld, *Amelia of Saxony*, and Blum (of Berlin,) all three formed on the model of elegant French comedy, but all inspired by a true German spirit, have gathered their laurels. They are the only poets of the modern German stage who have represented character under this threefold point of view, and have given us genuine human beings, not mere theatrical machines. (*Coulissenwesen* is the German word.) These poets re-

semble each other in this particular *only*, and in all others stand distinctly contrasted. Amelia of Saxony has more invention, more heart and soul, than Bauernfeld and Blum: strange to say, she has so completely seized the very spirit of popular and familiar life, that every, even the slightest word, is fraught with significance, and has a beneficent influence on the mind and feelings. (*Wohlthätig auf die Seele wirkt.*) Blum has more genius than Bauernfeld; the latter is more of an artist;"—and so on.

MEDON.

This is all very well—and, confess it—very *German:* fancy one of our fashionable playwrights —*writers* — I beg their pardon!—sitting down to consider man in his threefold capacity, or any capacity whatever!—*passons par-là*—and go on, for heaven's sake! Methinks you are "drawing out the thread of your discourse finer than the staple of your argument." I am quite ready to believe in the popularity of your Princess without further evidence. I still have to learn how she

obtained it—what she has done—how she has done it.

ALDA.

Well then, to take things in order, we must go back to her first acted production—" Falsehood and Truth." She gave in the same year, 1834, her second, " Die Braut aus der Residenz," (the Bride from Town): the most comic of all her plays—pure, genuine, German humour—touching the heart, while it shook one's sides with laughter. The character of Jacob Wehringer, as a portrait from common life, is admirably and—considering the hand that drew it—*wonderfully* true. Her next was the "Verlobungs-Ring," (the Bridal Ring,) played at Berlin, early in the next year, 1835. This comedy belongs to the style called in Germany *Familien-Gemälde*, (Family Pictures,) and Conversation-pieces. A young girl is betrothed (*verlobt*) to an amiable and sensible man, her father's choice, but fancies herself in love with a sentimental cousin, who threatens to shoot himself for her sake, *et cetera*: the be-

trothed lover generously resigns his pretensions to the younger inamorato; and the discovery of the frivolity and unworthiness of the latter, and the return of Francisca's heart to her first affection, form the very slight plot of this very pretty little drama, which charms by the spirited truth of the characters, and the terseness and elegance of the dialogue.

Soon afterwards she gave Die Fürstenbraut, (the Princely Bride,) played for the first time at Dresden. I have translated this comedy in preference to others more generally popular, for reasons which shall be given in proper time and place.* It has not been frequently played in Germany, but I recollect Mr. Charles Kemble, whose judgment is worth something in these matters, mentioned it to me as one of the most exquisite things in its way that he had ever seen on the stage. In the same year she produced "Der Oheim," (the Uncle,) which many consider as her masterpiece, and which is unquestionably the most

* See the introductory Remarks to the Princely Bride. Vol. i. p. 151.

universally popular of all her dramas: it was performed for the first time at Berlin, Emile Devriént personating the principal character; and immediately afterwards on every stage, from one end of Germany to the other; everywhere it was received with the most cordial approbation; nay, a pamphlet appeared containing an elaborate critical analysis of its character and merits—(which said pamphlet I have never seen;) and it has also been performed in an Italian translation at Florence. What amused me particularly, and pleased me too, was the enthusiasm which the character of the Doctor excited among the women—the young women especially. I am afraid, that to young Englishwomen, the good Dr. Löwe, with his dried butterflies, his unfashionable coat, and the "grave of his Marie," would appear, as a lover, not so irresistible as irresistibly ridiculous. It may, however, remind you of what Segur said, truly enough, of the German women generally, that "they have more sagacity in discovering the qualities of the heart, than acuteness in discerning those of the head;" or, as I

should rather express it, they are more susceptible of impressions conveyed through the medium of sentiment and association, than easily affected by external advantages or disadvantages of person, dress, or manner, and much less under the influence of conventional caprice, or ridicule, than we are.

MEDON.

They are to be congratulated!

ALDA.

You say that with *such* a look, as if it might be taken in two senses, and cut both ways—but I will not so understand it: they *are* to be congratulated. Well, the rapidity with which these dramas succeeded each other, is not the least remarkable thing about them. People were still in all the enthusiasm excited by "Der Oheim," when she produced, early in 1836, one of her most finished dramas, "Der Landwirth," (The Farmer.) It was performed for the first time at Dresden, and Emile Devriént played the

beautiful part of Rudolph to admiration. In the public estimation, this play ranks next to "The Uncle," but as far as my individual taste is concerned, I should give it the preference over all. The simplicity yet originality of the plot, the spirit and grace of the dialogue, the humour of some of the situations, the finely imagined character of Rudolph, the impressive scene in which he burns the paper which contains the evidence of his birthright, struck me so much, that I forthwith translated it freely, and not without a view to the English stage,* for which some good judges pronounced it "too elegant;" others were of opinion that "we had no actor to whom the character of Rudolph could be entrusted." Of its pretensions you may judge yourself, as you will find it at the end of the second volume, under the title of "The Country Cousin."

At Weimar, very soon after, appeared the elegant comedy of "Der Zögling," literally "The

* This drama was in the hands of Mr. Macready during the months of April, May, June, 1839, and then politely returned, as he was about to give up the management of the theatre.

Pupil," which I have translated under the title of "The Young Ward," as more accurately expressing the meaning of the German word in this particular instance. I was at Weimar at the time, and had the pleasure of witnessing the complete success of this beautiful *tableau de société*. It was about this period, as I recollect, that the real authorship of these dramas began to be talked of: there was, indeed, one circumstance, rather interesting in itself, which rendered it difficult to keep up the *incognita* for any length of time. Most of these dramas, before they were given to the public, were performed in the private theatre of the country palace at Pillnitz. I met with several persons who had witnessed these representations, who informed me that the Princess Amelia was herself the original Countess in the "Pupil," and her brother, Prince John, so distinguished in the political history of his country, the original Rudolph of the "Country Cousin." At Berlin, in the same year, she gave "Das Fräulein vom Lande," (the Country Girl,) which I

never saw, but have been told it is a sort of pendant to the "Landwirth." "Der Unentschlossene" (the Irresolute Man) was performed at Dresden in the course of the same year. It is a piece of portrait painting, and written, I suspect, for Emile Devriént, whose artist-like impersonation must have assisted in giving it popularity. The nervous irresolution of the hero appears a physical as well as a moral defect, and the amusement it excites is mingled with pity. The plot of this play is slight, but it contains some admirable touches of naïveté and humour.

"Vetter Heinrich" (Cousin Henry) was played at Berlin in 1837. This drama belongs to the class of *Familien-Gemälde*, (Family Pictures,) and the story is simple enough. Agnes, the daughter of a rich manufacturer, is intended by her father to marry her "cousin Henry," the traveller, or *commis voyageur* of the firm. Meantime she visits the capital (die Residenz) with a foolish novel-reading old aunt, and there becomes acquainted with a gambling adventurer, with whom she fancies

herself very much in love, and consequently gets into all manner of scrapes, from which she is extricated by her true-hearted but unpolished cousin. The rough simplicity and generosity of "Vetter Heinrich," aided by a happy accident, put to rout the intrigues of the adventurer, and restore Agnes to her sober senses. There is considerable humour in this play, and the characters are very distinctly and firmly drawn.

In the same year she gave at Berlin "Der Pflegevater," (the Foster-father,) which I have not met with. "Der Majoráts-erbe" was the next: it was played at Berlin early in 1838. In Germany, where the law of primogenture is most strictly enforced, the heir to the title and estates of a noble family is the "Majoráts-erbe.* This drama I should like to have translated, as a picture of manners peculiarly German: but I had already exceeded the bounds to which, with a due regard to the patience of my readers, I had

* The "Majorât," in the German law, is not exactly the right of primogeniture, but a particular species of entail, of which I am not learned enough to give an exact explanation.

resolved to confine myself. The characters in this piece are well imagined: we have two young men of noble family, first cousins; but Count Edmond, as the representative of the family dignities, has lands, power, and immense wealth; Count Leo has no resource but poverty, celibacy, and the cross of Malta. The manner in which this difference of position acts on the characters of the two young relatives, whose natural gifts are not unequal, is well delineated. Edmond, brought up in luxury, and with a high opinion of his own consequence, is indolent, half educated, a victim of ennui, but with generous and noble qualities of head and heart, which only require to be roused to action. Leo, with faculties sharpened by poverty, feelings embittered by his false position, clever, satirical, and hypocritical, at once envies and despises his cousin, whom he flatters before his face, and ridicules behind his back. Count Edmond is engaged to marry a spirited, accomplished girl of his own rank in life, the Countess Bertha, who is at first thoroughly disgusted by

the self-sufficient airs and indolence of her affianced bridegroom; but as the action of the play proceeds, and by a thousand little delicate touches in conversation, the real character of the two cousins is gradually developed before her, she becomes first interested, then captivated, by Edmond's almost unconscious magnanimity, and employs the influence she gains over his heart, to rouse him to energy and usefulness.

MEDON.

This is like the character of Lord Glenthorn in Miss Edgeworth's "Ennui."

ALDA.

Not unlike; but whether imitated or not, it is very happily and delicately drawn. The helplessness, and the insolent pretensions of the elegant and not ungenerous egotist, are made interesting as well as laughable; a sort of pathos is mixed up with the ridicule, which proves how closely the writer had studied the nicer shades of character. The next drama from her fertile pen

was "Die Unbelesene," (*i. e.* "*the woman who has read no books.*") In this piece, as in many others, the story is merely the development of a particular *individuality.* The portrait is that of a young girl, designedly brought up in total ignorance both of the world and of books. She is surrounded by a group of selfish plotters, each carrying on some particular intrigue, of which she is the object or intended victim. Without any perception of her true position — without any suspicion of the treachery by which she is surrounded — without any counter-contrivance — she escapes them all by mere straightforward simplicity and integrity; nay, by the very ignorance in which she has been educated as a means of subjecting her, she, in a series of humorous scenes, puts the schemers, one after another, *en déroute.*

MEDON.

But this is Wycherly's "Country Girl" over again.

ALDA.

No, most unlike; for Sophie has neither wit, nor cunning, nor coquetry, to come in aid of her ignorance; it is the triumph of genuine truth and purity of heart instinctively putting aside the false and the evil, rather than resisting or overcoming them. This play reads well; but, unless supported by good acting, it is rather ineffective on the stage. I should imagine it was intended by the authoress as a pendant to her first piece, "Falsehood and Truth."

Since I left Germany, two others have appeared; but whether the Princess has exhausted her comic vein, or the public begin to weary of so many pieces in the same style, the success has not been brilliant, as far as I can learn.

MEDON.

Why, one may have too much of a good thing, and *soupe-au-lait* has had its day. Don't look so comically angry!

ALDA.

I am angry with myself for having suggested that ridiculous phrase—which is most unjust besides.

MEDON.

Then, fairly and honestly speaking—and editorial and other partiality set aside—what rank would you assign to these royal dramas in point of intrinsic and literary excellence? I will allow them to be on some accounts remarkable, but are they anything else?

ALDA.

Unquestionably they are; taken altogether, they bear a certain stamp of original power, the stamp of the individual mind which produced them. I regard the Princess Amelia as a woman of genius, and genius of no common kind. I have heard critics, in fully admitting this, regret that her genius had not thrown itself forth in forms less trivial, more durable, than the mere

reflex of certain aspects of society, in themselves transient. I do not share this regret: she has given much unreproved pleasure, earned much gratitude. Her dramas are of unequal merit, as literary works, but we may be assured that they are the productions of a clear-sighted, noble-minded, truth-loving woman: the best of them I could not read or see without a glow of admiration for, and sympathy with, the writer; the tone of feeling is throughout so healthy, the satire so good-humoured, the pictures of manner so true to the life. There is a total absence of poetical colouring in the structure and style of her plays, which, of course, places her out of all comparison with such a writer as our own Joanna Baillie.

> The moving accident is not her trade,
> To freeze the blood she hath no ready arts;

but a most keen and delicate perception of character, and, if not wit, humour—genuine German humour; a style exceedingly clear, elegant, vigorous, and in the highest degree dramatic—these

she has. Her dramas bear the same relation to the classical and romantic drama that the novels of Jane Austen bear to those of Walter Scott; and have, indeed, the same sort of merit—that of delicate and refined portraiture, rather than striking incident or romantic passion. When I am told that such dramas as those of the Princess Amelia, which have pleased a whole people, and that too a reflective and intelligent people, are too refined for our stage, that no process of adaptation could render them endurable to an English audience, I admit the truth—but I must also regret it.

MEDON.

And yet you would not place our theatres under such influences as those which direct the theatres of Germany, where almost every stage is attached to a little court, trembling at the slightest breach of *bienséance* and etiquette, and subjected to a *censure* ridiculous and vexatious beyond belief? You would not make our na-

tional stage a school for girls of fifteen—"all mirth and innocence—all milk and water?"

ALDA.

Most assuredly not; for what then would become of the mightiest among us, who spoke out of the heart of man to man!—But why must mirth and innocence be necessarily milk and water?—why must our dramatic amusements appeal only to the coarser and more excitable perceptions of our nature? Is it not a common, oft-repeated observation, that delicate touches of nature and character, which are at once seized and appreciated by a French or a German *parterre*, are utterly thrown away upon the duller palate of an English public? and is not this want of refined discernment, of all susceptibility to the merely graceful and intellectual, referable to the nature of the entertainment placed before them?

MEDON.

O much-abused English public! You take it for

granted, then, that the reproach is true? When was there ever anything really excellent placed before the public, which was not understood and appreciated sooner or later? I could indeed wish to see less forbearance towards what is gross and common-place, and if not bad, at least most unsatisfactory: but I believe in the people's discernment of what is good, even while I lament their toleration of what is not good—no, not for man, woman, or child!

ALDA.

Do not think I have made these animadversions with any refereuce to the Princess Amelia, or that I claim for these elegant little dramas more than they are entitled to. I give them as what they are—as illustrations of a taste and a feeling in these matters, not English, nor subject to English rules of propriety and criticism, but German, and in harmony with the system of social life in that country. A royal lady, in this our nineteenth century, has stepped from her palace into the arena of literature—has

written very beautifully and successfully for her own sex and for her own people—has exchanged etiquettes for sympathies, and lip and knee homage for the fame which is "love disguised;" and shall we not hail the *Erscheinung?** As a princess, she may truly be said to have broken through a Chinese wall of prejudices; as a woman, considering the present state of feeling about literary women in Germany, she has set an example which may prove of incalculable advantage; as a writer, too, in the long-forgotten style of *Characterschilderungen*, (dramatic portrait painting,) she has opened new ground, and has already found imitators and emulators; for example, in those beautiful little pieces, *Die Geschwister*, (the Brother and Sister, not Goethe's drama of that name;) *Die Verirrungen*, (the Errors;) and in particular, *Die Isolirten*, (the people who stand alone in the world.) In this most elegant *tableau de société*, a number of persons are grouped together, all of whom, either from accident or character, are with-

* *Anglice*, an appearance, or phenomenon, generally of a bright and agreeable kind.

out any near social ties, (*i. e. isolated.*) There is a widowed, childless old Baroness; an unacknowledged daughter; a young man, an orphan, fighting his way unaided through the world; a wife, separated from a worthless husband; a prim, elderly *chanoinesse*, as hard as flint; a selfish, epicurean old bachelor, who has bribed his kindred to leave him alone; and a benevolent old bachelor who laments his loneliness. The ingenuity with which these isolated personages are placed in relation to each other,—the exquisite tact with which they are contrasted,—the delicate indications of hidden motives,—the conflict of petty vanities and petty interests, and deep feelings and vile passions, but just visible through the superficial veil of conventional elegance,—rendered this little thing a gem in its way.

MEDON.

But the *mis-en-scène* of such a piece must have required a style of acting of which we have no example?

ALDA.

Yes, the acting of *acting*, so to speak. This piece is attributed to a Prince Charles of Mecklenberg, who died two or three years ago, but how truly I know not; while I was in Germany it was yet unpublished, and confined to the theatrical *Répertoires*. The Princess Amelia has allowed some of her works to be collected into volumes and printed, (under the modest title of *Beiträge*, "Essays for the German Stage,") for the benefit of a charitable association of ladies at Dresden; the motive, as she told me herself, was to escape the imputed authorship of several things which were not really hers. It will, perhaps, be a satisfaction to you to know that I thought her deportment and personal appearance very much in harmony with the benign and womanly character of her works. She has a fine open brow, a clear, penetrating blue eye, and a mingled expression of benevolence and *finesse* lurking round her small mouth. Her manners are, for a Princess, not so much what you would call *gracious*, as simple

and cordial; altogether, she struck me as a very pleasing, lively, kind-hearted person. Such she *is:* you may now judge for yourself, in part at least, of what she has *done:* out of fifteen or sixteen dramas, I have given five, and these not, perhaps, the best I could have chosen, had my aim been merely to amuse. I think the two pieces already mentioned, *The Bride from Town* and *The Bridal Ring*, have more of comic spirit in them, but they are less decidedly national in their costume than those I have selected as suited to my particular purpose. My translation is, I am afraid, too close to do justice to the general beauty of style in these comedies; it is indeed faithful even to *literalness*, except where such extreme fidelity, by becoming ridiculous, would be false to the meaning and spirit of the original. I have even, that my picture might be complete in all its details, retained particular idioms and modes of expression wherever it was possible, and where impossible, have generally given them in the margin; and in the use of titles and conventional phrases, I have been guided by

my own taste, and my perception of nice shades of distinction, more easily felt than explained. I believe I have now said all I *can* say in the way of apology and prologue. Are you content?

MEDON.

I am content.

ALDA.

Then the curtain rises!

Here sit, and see!——
Minding things *true* by what their mockeries be!

HENRY V.

FALSEHOOD AND TRUTH.

[Lüge und Wahrheit.]

A PLAY.

IN FOUR ACTS.

REMARKS.

The play of "Falsehood and Truth" was the first of the Princess Amelia's productions which was publicly represented. It was performed at the Royal Theatre of Berlin, in the spring of 1834, under the circumstances already detailed in the Introduction.

This drama, though written in the original with much spirit and elegance, strikes me as inferior in the interest of the story, in variety of incident, and conception of character, to many which succeeded; it proved, however, one of her most popular pieces, and is very frequently performed. The part of Juliana was originally played by Mademoiselle Hagen, the first actress in elegant comedy at Berlin: her exquisite impersonation of the part, and the success of the piece, made it a fashion for the best actresses to exert their powers in Juliana. Mrs. Butler tells us in her journal, that she has known actresses "who, in the performance of unvirtuous and unlovely characters, seemed anxious to impress the audience with the wide difference between their assumed and their real disposition, by acting as ill and looking as cross as they possibly could; which, she humorously adds, "could not but be a great satisfaction to any moral audience." This vulgar mis-

conception of the duty and aim of an artist I never saw in Germany, where the part of Juliana, in the hands of such performers as Mademoiselle Hagen and Mademoiselle Bauer, is always rendered as captivating as the most sparkling grace of demeanour and elegance of person and costume can make it, certainly in accordance with the conception and intention of the author, and, let me add, in accordance with the truth of nature. In reading the play, the character of Juliana is something next to hateful; her insolent airs and her almost gratuitous artifices come before us unsoftened and unredeemed by any of the graces of look and manner, which give such an effect to the beautiful impersonation I have seen on the stage. "So much the better," I hear some worthy people exclaim; as if the notion that vice must always look ugly, were not one of the most dangerous and absurd ever circulated. Others have regarded the union of generous and amiable qualities with that one revolting fault,—a total want of integrity, as inconsistent and unnatural. Now a character is not to be pronounced inconsistent which exhibits the combination of opposite and apparently contradictory qualities, for such in our intercourse with society meet us at every turn. Lately, in turning over "Boswell's Life of Johnson," I met with an account of a gentleman, who, at the time when the "Man of Feeling" first appeared, anonymously, represented himself as the author, took all the merit on himself, dined out day after day as "the man of feeling:" excited the "sensibilities" of tender-hearted young ladies, and accepted of attentions and friendships on the strength of his pretended authorship. The miserable and paltry falsehoods by which he must have sustained the deception, and the mean vanity which prompted it, fill us with disgust and indignation; yet the same man, a few years afterwards, perished in attempting to save a poor drowning boy, who was in no way connected with him.

To return to Juliana. I am afraid it must be admitted that the character is both natural and consistent, and I am afraid I must add, after a good deal of experience and observation, as regards my own sex, that a turn for intrigue, and a want of courageous

straightforward truth, are too frequent in women. Upon what conventional principle is it, that a lie is presumed to dishonour the man, and does not dishonour the woman?—whence that disposition to subterfuge and evasion—that inclination to prefer the devious path to a given object; to seem, rather than to be; and—where they do not, or *dare* not lie,—to arrange the truth so as to serve a purpose;—in short, all the petty artifices about trifles which have been a standing reproach against womankind from time immemorial? And whence that neglect of accuracy in the use of words—accuracy, one of the signs and safeguards of the spirit of truth? I scarcely ever hear a woman relate or describe anything accurately, though, from the quickness and discriminating delicacy of our perceptions, this ought to be a feminine characteristic. It arises from some most mistaken principles in the early education of women; the influence of the negative principle, the principle of fear, in which we are brought up, and made dissemblers on system. A really honest, simple-minded woman, seeking and speaking the truth for its own sake, is what I have very rarely met with; while women, whose whole existence seemed to me one lie, who lived and moved in a network of petty artifices, I have too often seen, and with more of shame and commiseration than any other feeling. I have sometimes thought that only a woman could ever sound the depths of a woman's dissimulation—only a woman could chase truth through the labyrinthine recesses of a woman's heart to that last recess where it hides itself, unspeakable, unspoken. Truth in one sense we certainly may boast: we are as true to our affections, our duties, our engagements, as men can be; but we are less sincere: we are perhaps afraid to be as sincere as we ought to be, and would be if we could. How often have I seen a woman who would die for the man she loved a thousand times over, cheat him ten times a day about straws!

At her own breakfast she'll project a scheme,
Nor take her tea without a stratagem!

This failing in our sex has been admirably treated by some writers in our own country, as in Miss Edgworth's "Manœuvring," in

her charming tale of "Helen;" in Mrs. Opie's "White Lies;" but to these and other excellent and well-intentioned works I have one general objection,—they do not appear to me to take sufficiently high ground. I speak it with deference, but the moral of these and similar works, including this play of the Princess Amelia, might be summed up in these words:—"Always speak the truth, because—it is extremely disagreeable and inconvenient to be found out in a lie." Now truth, like religion, should be a habit of the soul,—a state of being—the fountain from which our words and actions flow—not a thing of expediency. Think ye, mothers, that by instructing your daughters to avoid the palpable verbal lie, as a wicked or a dangerous thing, you teach her truth? You may by manifold whippings, and such like appliances, make your child afraid to tell a lie, but thus you will never implant the principle and habit of clear-thoughted, upright sincerity, in heart, in purpose, in deed, in word. Be true with your child; teach her to be true for truth's sake; give her courage and freedom, which, if they are the sure result, are as often the springs of truth: weakness, whether it arise from organisation or position, is seldom true. I could say much more on this subject; but in a work of this light nature, it would scarce be fitting to touch on the more elevated and sacred source of all truth—that holy law which has pronounced all untruth defilement. We dismiss Juliana in this play, with a hope that, as she has an excellent understanding, she will for the future prudently avoid the inconvenient habit of lying; but confidence is destroyed: who would trust her, except, indeed, the man who is over head and ears in love with her? and that because, as he says himself, "es ist nicht zu helfen,"—"he cannot help it." Meerfeld is capital, and essentially German in the bluntness and even rudeness of his plain dealing, and in the sentiment and magnanimity which lie beneath this crust. The part of Wiesel, when well played, produces much comic effect; the creeping, crawling, cat-like movements of this mean parasite, the bent body, the features fixed in an eternal grin of acquiescence and complacency, I have seen admirably given.

Frederica, with her embroidery and cookery-book, her kitchen cares, and her taste for Schiller and for poetry, her simplicity and her timidity, is very pretty and very *very* German. I am not sure that I should call her *true;* she is in a false position, which always implies some sacrifice to appearance, some discrepancy between the inner and the outward life, which cannot last long without more or less deterioration of the whole moral being.

The scene we may suppose at Leipsig, with which *locale* the manners represented, and the allusions scattered throughout the play, would suit perfectly.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

FREYMANN,	*A rich banker.*
JULIANA,	*His daughter.*
FREDERICA,	*A distant relation.*
FRANCIS WILLMAR.	
MEERFELD,	*A rich merchant of Hamburg.*
WIESEL.	
CHRISTINE,	*Frederica's old Nurse.*
JOHANN,	*Freymann's servant.*

FALSEHOOD AND TRUTH.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A Room in Freymann's House.*

FREDERICA *seated at her work, (near a window,) afterwards* CHRISTINE.

FREDERICA.

At last I have all my accounts ready, and may sit down to my work again. It is unusually quiet here to-day, and I will take advantage of the leisure and the daylight. This must be finished in a week at farthest; and there is yet so much to be done, that I shall be obliged to borrow a night or two from sleep to get on with it.

CHRISTINE (*entering*).

Do I find you at last, my dear, Frederica?* Do not be offended if I have ventured to follow you into the sitting-room. You know I never did such a thing in my life before; but you are never to be found in your own little room now.

FREDERICA.

This was washing week; and then I had to make trial of a new cook, and to hire her. I had to make up my accounts for the year, and to give them in; in short, from morning to night I have been unable to stir. But do not think I forgot you, for all that, Christine! You must pay your rent in a week; and I shall have the money for you, and something over besides. And now what have you to say?

CHRISTINE.

No, no, my dear child, I cannot allow it! No; your uncle is kind to you, and it were abusing his kindness if you were to trouble him on my account.

FREDERICA.

That I will never do. I know better what is due to you, my dear Christine. You shall never

* In this scene, and throughout the play, Christine, the old nurse, addresses her foster-child, Frederica, in the third person plural Sie, expressive of respect and consideration, while Frederica uses, in addressing her, the familiar Du, *thou*, which at once marks the relation in which they stand to each other.

be obliged to receive charity as long as I exist. This muslin dress, which I had to embroider six weeks ago, will be ready in a week; the Countess Solkonska has purchased it, and so I shall have the money that from my heart I offer you.

CHRISTINE.

You poor dear soul! Household cares—the washing—the kitchen to superintend—accounts to keep—vexation to bear, and in hours of recreation—work, work! What good is it that your uncle has taken you into his house, and supports you,. if you must now toil for me, as once you toiled for yourself? Alas, alas! 'tis time heaven took me to itself! I am good for nothing, but to destroy your rest.

FREDERICA.

Did you think of rest when I lay ill of the measles and the scarlet fever? Ah! I sometimes regret that I cannot repay you, as I could then, out of my own necessities—that I can but offer you no wwhat is to me superfluous.

CHRISTINE.

O do not talk so, or I must weep! I always said it, there is not such another heart in the wide world! but surely you will be rewarded; you will be happy, my Frederica—I am sure of it—O *so* happy!

FREDERICA.

Am I not so already?

CHRISTINE.

So you say; but I have taken it into my head that things might be better with you.

FREDERICA.

I desire nothing better.

CHRISTINE.

Well, then, I desire it for you. Why do you look at me with such surprise? You would not spend your whole life long in your present position—would you?

FREDERICA.

Why not?

CHRISTINE.

Because it will not do at all. True, your uncle maintains you at his cost; but, for all that, you are neither more nor less than his housekeeper.

FREDERICA.

If you only knew, Christine, what a satisfaction it is to my mind to be able to do him some little service in return for his goodness!

CHRISTINE.

And then your fine lady cousin, with her conceit and her caprices—I can hardly bear the sight of her. Does not she treat you as if you were

a sort of Cinderella—a mere simpleton? whereas she might thank heaven if she were but half so clever. To be sure, she can talk of balls, plays, fashions; but for all that concerns housekeeping, the very servants laugh at her whenever she speaks of such things.

FREDERICA (*smiling*).

She has accomplishments much more difficult to attain than the art of compounding a soup.

CHRISTINE.

Why, then, why can't she learn as well how to make a good soup, if it is so very easy?

FREDERICA.

My dear Christine, you don't understand:—my cousin is rich—she has never known the want of servants.

CHRISTINE.

Whoso requires the service of others is dependent, and whoso is dependent has no right to be proud.

FREDERICA.

Juliana is good-natured—that she really is. If she does not treat me with confidence and intimacy, if she looks on me as a silly child, it is my own fault. She stands before me so assured in herself, so much my superior, that I, with my foolish timidity, scarcely dare utter a word in her presence.

CHRISTINE.

Well, she will soon be married, I suppose, and then you will be rid of her. There is a young gentleman always about the house, a certain Herr Willmar. I hav'n't seen him, but people say——

FREDERICA (*quickly*.)

He! heaven bless you!—why, she cannot endure him; she treats him so ill sometimes that my very heart bleeds for him,—for Willmar is one of the best of men; poor, I believe indeed, but that only interests me the more, for I think the poor sympathise with each other. That he often comes to the house, I cannot deny. My uncle Freymann educated him, and spared nothing for his maintenance and his advancement in the world: perhaps he would do more for him, if my cousin did not hate him so. This groundless dislike to a man who has never offended her, is the only thing I cannot understand in my cousin, and for which I could sometimes be downright angry with her: somebody must have slandered him to her—but who? I have often, often thought about it till I was giddy, and still it is all a mystery to me.

CHRISTINE.

Ho, ho! you can be quite eloquent, I see, on the subject of this Herr Willmar.

FREDERICA.

I am, as you know, generally patient and acquiescent, but anything like injustice rouses my indignation—I cannot endure it.

CHRISTINE.

Has, then, Willmar complained to you of Mamsell Juliana's behaviour?

FREDERICA.

Do you think I am on such terms with *him?* He hardly sees me—I doubt whether he knows my name. It is plain, my good Christine, that you know no one in the house but the servants, who are indeed attached to me, and speak of me kindly, I dare say; but for others, I am nothing more than a living machine.

CHRISTINE.

I hear some one coming, and will be gone; we shall meet this afternoon or to-morrow morning in your own room; but here I would rather not be caught as your visiter. I will not have you ashamed of me.

FREDERICA.

Ashamed of you! my kind nurse, my earliest friend! Stay, Christine—

CHRISTINE.

'Tis your fine lady cousin—I will not meet her. [*She hurries out.*

FREDERICA.

I Willmar's confidante! I could hardly forbear laughing at my good simple Christine.

Enter JULIANA.*

JULIANA.

You here, Frederica! Who was it who left you just now?

FREDERICA.

Old Christine.

JULIANA.

Indeed! I thought it might have been—— but no matter! I am invited to tea this evening to Hofrath Weiler's.† I have refused his invitation so often that I must absolutely go this time, so I do not want my ticket for the theatre; here it is—you can take it, and use it if you like.

FREDERICA (*timidly*).

Perhaps you may have intended it for another?

JULIANA.

You goose! if I had, I should not have offered

* Although the two young ladies are cousins, the haughty Juliana addresses Frederica as Du, thou. Frederica, the poor dependant, uses the pronoun Sie.

† Hofrath is a title of distinction for which we have no equivalent; it signifies literally, "court-counsellor." It is sometimes merely honorary, involving no duties.

it to you; you have not seen many plays, I fancy?

FREDERICA.

One or two.

JULIANA.

It is the maid. of Orleans to-night—Schiller's.

FREDERICA (*looking up with animation*).

Is it indeed?

JULIANA.

Did you ever hear the name before?

FRDERICA.

Schiller's? O surely.

JULIANA (*laughing*).

I don't mean the haberdasher Schiller, our neighbour; *he* didn't write the tragedy.

FREDERICA (*looking down*).

I know——

JULIANA.

You'll not understand much of it probably, but it will amuse you; there is a good deal of *spectacle* in it—soldiers—fighting—a grand procession—and, only think, a woman all dressed up in armour!

FREDERICA.

Yes, the Maid——

JULIANA.

Of Orleans. Do you know where Orleans is?

FREDERICA.

O yes.

JULIANA.

In Turkey, eh?

FREDERICA.

You laugh at me, cousin!

JULIANA.

O heaven forbid!—my good Frederica, one may fulfil one's duties in the world without knowing whereabouts Orleans is. Now I think of it, that disagreeable man, that Willmar, has been expecting news from his uncle, which are probably in this letter: (*taking out a letter:*) there, be so good as to give it to him if he should come this way. I am too glad to spare myself the necessity of exchanging a word with him.

FREDERICA.

Why are you so unkind to him?

JULIANA.

O he tires me—he provokes me—his face likes me not!—enough of him—I must give the tailor an audience,* and then——(*she goes to the door, and then turns back quickly*)—Frederica, don't forget the letter.

* It may sound strange to hear a young lady talk of giving the *tailor* (Schneider) an audience; but in many parts of Germany, in the north particularly, the ladies' gowns are made by men, as their riding-habits in this country.

FREDERICA.

Never fear me.

JULIANA (*goes and returns once more*).

And in case Willmar does not come, it must be sent to him—do you hear? [*She goes out.*

FREDERICA.

I will attend to it. Poor Willmar! he is disgracefully treated; he will keep away from the house altogether, I fear; and truly who could wonder if he did?

Enter WILLMAR.

WILLMAR (*aside, and looking round as he enters*).

She is not here.

FREDERICA (*in a low voice, and without rising*).

Herr Willmar.

WILLMAR.

Ah! good morning, Mamsell* Frederica; can you tell me where I shall find your cousin Juliana?

FREDERICA (*rising*).

She is engaged, and commissioned me to give you this letter.

* The title of Mamsell, i.e. Mademoiselle, by which Juliana and Frederica are addressed, shows them to be decidedly *bourgeoises*, (bürgerliche). Fraülein is the proper title of an unmarried lady of noble birth, but it is sometimes given in courtesy where it cannot be claimed as a right.

WILLMAR.

So—you are your cousin's confidante!

FREDERICA.

How her confidante?

WILLMAR.

You know the contents of this letter?

FREDERICA.

I only know it comes from your uncle.

WILLMAR.

From my uncle?

FREDERICA.

And my cousin says that you have been long expecting it.

WILLMAR (*walking aside as he opens the letter*).

Dissimulation — nothing but dissimulation! How it goes against my heart! whither has this lovely tyrant allured me? Thank heaven, which has taken pity on me at last, I am now provided for; I may hope this very day to throw this burthen of deceit from my conscience, and once more look my benefactor in the face like an honest man. [*He reads.*

FREDERICA (*aside, looking at him*).

The letter makes him sad.

WILLMAR.

Scruples and caution! not accept the invitation of Hofrath Weiler!—why should I not? Before evening comes, will she not be my af-

fianced bride? (*he reads in a low voice*), "My dearest Francis, I know you will again reproach me, and call me false—dissembling—but my dissembling is but the excess of my love. I know I am doing wrong—that I am practising falsehood and deceit, but I cannot repent; I even love my fault for the sake of the object, and shall that dear object be more severe upon me than myself?" How tender—how full of feeling! who could behold her, and read such a letter as this, and not acquit me!*—(*To Frederica.*) Do you think your cousin Juliana will be here again in the course of the morning?

FREDERICA.

I think she will.

WILLMAR.

Permit me to wait for her. (*He sits down and takes a book from the table*)—A new annual,† I see, with drawings and engravings.

FREDERICA.

It is my cousin's.

WILLMAR.

Have you read it?

* "Und mir dann den Stab brechen," is the German metaphor, derived from the custom of the judge breaking a staff when a criminal is sentenced to death.

† Taschenbuch. The fashion of annuals, with which we have been inundated for the last ten or twelve years, came first from Germany, in the form of literary almanacks or Taschenbücher.

FREDERICA.

O no! how should I find time to read such things?

WILLMAR.

I presume you are not very fond of reading?

FREDERICA.

Yes, but then it must be—— [*She stops.*

WILLMAR.

Well, what must it be?

FREDERICA.

I mean, it *ought* to be something more useful.

WILLMAR.

But now-a-days in literature the useful and the agreeable are blended; we have historical romances. Here, for instance, is the history of Mary Stuart arranged in the most delicious poetry.

FREDERICA.

It may be so, and yet——

WILLMAR.

Such a production has at once all the attraction of truth, and all the charm of fiction.

FREDERICA.

Of truth?—I do not quite agree with you.

WILLMAR.

How so?

FREDERICA.

I think truth can never be interwoven with fiction, without in some degree suffering from the contact.

WILLMAR (*with an expression of surprise*).

Perhaps you may be right there.

FREDERICA.

And therefore it is that these historical romances seem to me hardly fit reading for the unlearned; for were it not almost better not to be informed at all on such subjects, than to be imperfectly informed, or imbued with false impressions of real facts or persons?

WILLMAR (*aside*).

Really, the girl is worth talking to.

Enter JULIANA.

JULIANA.

I must take refuge here, it is so intolerably hot in my own room. Ha! you here, Herr Willmar! have you had your uncle's letter?

WILLMAR.

Mamsell Frederica had the goodness——

JULIANA.

And therefore, in return, *you* must have the goodness to accompany her to the theatre this evening.

WILLMAR.

To the theatre?

JULIANA.

Yes, I have given her my ticket;* she will find Madame Stoll in the box, to be sure; but it will not do to send her through the streets alone.

WILLMAR.

Certainly, by no means.

FREDERICA.

If—if it be inconvenient to Herr Willmar, I would rather give up the play.

JULIANA.

Herr Willmar must and will deem it a high honour to be your cavalier. I am curious to hear what you will have to tell us to-morrow of the Maid of Orleans. I expect we shall have you talking in blank verse.†

WILLMAR.

I shall be pleased to witness the first impression which such a masterpiece must make on Mamsell Frederica.

* In all the theatres throughout Germany you may have a subscription, either for the season or a definite number of performances, as at the Italian Opera here; and in the small towns, where every one is known, young ladies may be seen alone at the theatre without any impropriety. The beautiful little theatre at Weimar is in this respect like a family drawing-room.

† Literally "in Iambics."

JULIANA.

And you can explain to her what she does not understand of it.

WILLMAR.

That will hardly be necessary.

JULIANA.

Why, to be sure, Frederica has taken to reading lately: I caught her turning over the leaves of a huge quarto volume the other day. I thought of course she was studying the Magdeburgh cookery-book*—peeped over—and what do you think it was?—only guess—Rollin's Roman History!

WILLMAR.

In French?

JULIANA.

Yes; et je parie qu'elle ne sait pas le mot de Français.

[*Frederica, who has all this time kept her eyes fixed on her work in painful embarrassment, rises, and is going.*

JULIANA.

Where are you going?

FREDERICA.

I have things to attend to. [*She goes out.*

* The "Magdeburgh Kochbuch" is as famous in the north of Germany as Mrs. Glass or Mrs. Rundell among English housewives.

WILLMAR.

You have pained her.

JULIANA.

O Lord, no, she didn't understand me—but I'm glad she's gone; we may now, for the first time for a week past, speak without witnesses. What do you say to my letter, Willmar? the command to absent yourself from a party, where I intend to be, will seem hard to you, but I could not avoid it; I have remarked that here and there people have begun to suspect our mutual understanding, and it has therefore become necessary to go to work with double caution.

WILLMAR.

Caution! thank heaven we need no more caution.—I am at length happy—the happiest of men, my Juliana! I am appointed secretary to Prince Adolphus: I may now venture to appear before your father, openly ask your hand, and renounce all falsehood and dissimulation for ever.

JULIANA.

You are the prince's secretary?

WILLMAR.

I am; 'tis but an hour since the letter reached me; and only one who has suffered as I have suffered, can conceive the feelings of my heart at this moment.

JULIANA.

So! secretary to the prince! I wish you joy—but do you think my father will the more readily consent to our union?

WILLMAR.

And when you acknowledge that you love me?—O Juliana! your father is the best of men! nor will he condemn me, if that which I have obtained through his good help I now lay at his daughter's feet.

JULIANA.

And what have you obtained, pray? what is it you lay at his daughter's feet?—a poor two thousand dollars a year! enough to satisfy love; but will it satisfy a father's pride?

WILLMAR.

A father's pride? I know not—but a benefactor's?

JULIANA.

Do not be angry with me, Willmar; but I do wish you would not hurry.

WILLMAR.

By heavens! I can endure this no longer—my principles have given way too far before your system of concealment and deception. I was—yes, I *was* a man of honour—straightforward and open as day, when first you knew me, Juliana! I gazed on you with admiration, as we gaze on

the sun—on the moon in heaven—on all which we may admire unreproved, even because we regard it as unattainable. I never had dared to raise my eyes to you with a wish until—O think on it well!—you allowed me to hope—you stooped to me in kindness—I dared to confess my love, which till then I had concealed even from myself — and became your slave; but you have abused your power, Juliana! For your sake—for yours, I have become a dissembler, and have repaid my benefactor with ingratitude: yet fear not that I will reproach you with that which has, perhaps, led me to the summit of happiness. Only do not ask me to proceed one step farther in these crooked paths: since fate has, almost by a miracle, led me back to the path of honour, I were a despicable wretch if I did not at once accept the boon.

JULIANA.

Do I deserve this vehemence? This, then, is the reward I reap for having renounced so many conquests, and refused so many brilliant offers for your sake!

WILLMAR.

My heart, my soul, my existence are yours; but that which is far above all these — conscience —*that* no human being should place in the keeping of another.

JULIANA.

This is one of your tragedy fits;—but do what you will for me;—in the worst case, my father will only turn you out of his house, and for me there is always the convent:—for, Willmar; another's will I never be—never!

WILLMAR.

Juliana!—but be more composed! some one is coming.

Enter FREYMANN.

FREYMANN.

Good morning, Juliana! welcome, my dear Francis! I am come to surprise you with a delightful piece of news; I am as happy as a king to-day.

WILLMAR (*anxiously*).

And, trusting in your accustomed goodness, may I hope that the news I have for *you* will not be indifferent to you?

JULIANA (*carelessly*).

He came to tell you that he is secretary to Prince Adolphus.

FREYMANN.

Why, then, I will celebrate this day as one of the happiest of my life! two of my first objects attained at once—my two children provided for:

my son—for you are the son of my heart—in a good office! and my daughter married!

WILLMAR.

How!

FREYMANN (*to Juliana*).

My correspondent in Hamburg, the son of my old friend Meerfeld, proposed for you a month ago; I asked you then, without letting you guess my motive, if your heart were quite free; you told me it was, and your answer went by the next post to Hamburg. Meerfeld, who, like myself, never lets the grass grow under his feet,* threw himself into his carriage: he is young, handsome, rich—he has just alighted at the Golden Lion, and in five minutes he will be here. On Monday you shall be betrothed, and Monday week is your wedding-day.

JULIANA.

In a week, my dear father? Pardon me, but how are we even to know each other in a week?

FREYMANN.

To see each other a week is enough—to know each other a year too little—and then, who talks of lovers knowing each other? they always appear in masquerade, as they do at the Redoute.

* "Der mit der Zeit Rath hält" is the corresponding German idiom.

If the gentleman were to pine for half a century, and you to coquet and dress at him for another half century, think you, you would *know* each other a bit the better for it all? Both your heads would be addled at last by playing such a farce, and for so long—and that's all the good we should have of it.

JULIANA.

As the daughter of Freymann, the rich banker, I cannot be married as if I had come out of the orphan school; my wedding must be solemnized with becoming splendour, and preparations must be made accordingly.

FREYMANN.

Which are already looked to: I have been myself to Madame Girard, and have bespoke your wedding dress, all of French blonde, such as the queen herself might wear—cost two hundred dollars: in my room, on the sofa, lie a dozen India shawls, and thirty silks or more, all from Franke's warehouse;—go choose what you like. My head clerk has gone to the jeweller's, to see about your jewels: your Dorothy has gone to the fair to buy linen and laces, and John has been sent for the tailor, who will be here in a moment to take your measure. The whole household are on their legs for you. Your dowry lies ready in bank bills. So do not fear—nothing

shall be wanting, nothing forgotten; in a week you shall be Madame Meerfeld, and in a fortnight we shall all be on the road to Hamburg.

JULIANA.

And suppose I shouldn't like this Meerfeld?

FREYMANN.

Not like him! and pray why should you not like him?

JULIANA.

If my heart——

FREYMANN.

Your heart is free—didn't you tell me so yourself? and don't we know that a young girl's heart, when it is free, is ever just on the spring? let but a wooer appear with a good face and a ready tongue, and it's off like a shot at once. What do you think, eh, Francis?

WILLMAR.

I think the heart of your daughter far too precious to be yielded to the first who offers himself.

FREYMANN.

Early wooed, and early won,
Was never repented under the sun.*

Is she to wait, pr'ythee, till she's forty, and take the last who offers?

* Jung gefreit, hat niemand bereut, is the German proverb.

WILLMAR.

A young lady possessed of your daughter's beauty and understanding, and surrounded by a host of admirers—

JULIANA (*petulantly*).

Pray let us have no more of this, sir: I must be in a better humour than I am to-day, to endure your complimentary *fadeurs.*

FREYMANN.

Oh ho! Juliana, what objection have you to this day, of all days in the year? the third of June, a charming sunshiny day, and Saturday too: I like Saturday—it has always been my lucky day: fie! I know not how you look! I will not have those frowns when your bridegroom comes; they will not do at all, Juliana.

JULIANA.

I don't care, not I, how I look. I certainly shall put no restraint on my looks for the sake of this Meerfeld!

FREYMANN.

The idea of being married seems to have put you into a mighty ill humour.

JULIANA.

Only—if you would not be in such a hurry, my dear father!

FREYMANN.

But when I tell you that the dress is there,

and the shawls, and that the tailor is coming, and—eh, Juliana?—you havn't imposed on me now with that free heart of yours?

JULIANA.

What do you mean, papa?

FREYMANN.

Only this Lieutenant Kramer, who has been very assiduous in his attentions lately—

WILLMAR.

Ay, indeed?

FREYMANN.

We have never been to a party where we did not find him, and he has a wonderful knack at guessing our fancies and intentions in walking and driving, for we are sure to meet him every day.

WILLMAR.

I never heard your daughter speak of him.

FREYMANN.

No, she speaks *to* him.

JULIANA.

This is really affronting, papa; Lieutenant Kramer, they say, is almost an engaged man, and surely you cannot think——

FREYMANN.

Well, well, my dear girl, I will not think it possible; it were my death-blow if you should come to me at this time o' day with a love-tale.

A month ago, God knows, you might have taken whom you liked for me, rich or poor; it had been all the same, if he had been an honest man; but now, in such a case, I must appear in Meerfeld's eyes no better than a fool, a ninny.

WILLMAR (*aside*).

Wretch that I am! accursed dissimulation!

JULIANA.

Do not fret yourself into a fever, my dear father; if it be the decree of fate that Meerfeld is to be my lord and master, why, so it will be. (*Aside to Willmar*). Make yourself easy; I shall know how to get rid of him.

FREYMANN.

What are you saying there?

JULIANA.

That I think it would be hardly decorous for me to rejoice over the future, or to select my trousseau before I have even seen my intended bridegroom.

FREYMANN.

Why, that's true indeed—you are right. She's right there, Willmar. I only ask you not to look as if you were going to be hanged; and for my too great haste you must make allowances. You know I have been quick all my life:—while my partners were consulting about a speculation, I was already in the midst of it;

while rivals were ogling your mother, I had asked her to fix the day; before my doctor could write a prescription, I had already swallowed the remedy nearest at hand. I have to thank my promptitude for riches, happiness, perhaps life itself; and when death comes at last, I shall take just a hasty leave of you all, and get over the last hour as quickly as possible.

WILLMAR.

God grant it may yet be far distant!

FREYMANN.

I care not how distant—the farther off the better; but when it *does* come to the last, no lingering—that's all. But now to other matters. So you are secretary to Prince Adolphus?—a capital place—plenty to do—and profitable work too—twelve hundred dollars besides fees. Now the next thing you have to do is to get a pretty wife—o' my conscience I believe you have some such thought in your head already—eh?

WILLMAR.

Herr Freymann!

FREYMANN.

Well, why need you blush? if you are in love, say so at once—there's no need to be ashamed of it, for no doubt your choice is worthy of you—it could not be otherwise.

WILLMAR.

O my benefactor! my father!

FREYMANN.

I understand—such an exclamation is as good as a confession. Well, and so you *are* in love;—do I know her? who is it?

WILLMAR.

O that I dared to speak!

FREYMANN.

And what hinders you?

WILLMAR.

I fear lest my choice should displease you.

FREYMANN.

Why, is she not come of honest kin?

WILLMAR.

She is the daughter of one of the best of men.

FREYMANN.

Then I require no more; all young ladies are pretty, as a matter of course: and as for money, if she have no fortune, why I can give you a lift at first, and you must begin with economy.

WILLMAR.

Such condescension—such goodness—O! I were the basest of men if I longer concealed from you——

JULIANA (*in a low voice*).

Go on—and lose me for ever!

FREYMANN.

Go on—I am all ear.

WILLMAR.

What have I said? I am so confused—I hardly know what I mean.

FREYMANN.

So it seems indeed.

JULIANA.

Herr Willmar, pray be so good as to defer your tender confessions to another opportunity; for, as you must perceive, I have an infinity of things to say to my father.

WILLMAN.

Mamsell Juliana thinks that this is not a fit time for my explanation. I submit—but (*with emphasis*) for the last time. [*He goes out.*

FREYMANN.

What's the matter with him, do you know?

JULIANA.

I certainly shall not take the trouble of guessing his secrets.

FREYMANN.

Well, well—don't speak so scornfully of my good Francis; he is an industrious, worthy fellow.

JULIANA.

Why, he is not absolutely insufferable, but at this moment very much in my way, for I have a request to make.

FREYMANN.

Well, out with it.

JULIANA.

You will laugh at me, papa! A few minutes ago I wouldn't hear a word of this trousseau, and now I am really impatient just to see the shawls and the things.

FREYMANN.

Well, come with me to my room. You young girls are strange creatures, after all. Dress? O we despise it! A husband? Fie, don't mention such a thing! But let any one think to deprive you of one or the other, what weeping and wailing! Ay, I see it will be with Meerfeld as with the India shawls—come along. [*He goes out.*

JULIANA (*aside, and following*).

We'll contrive to keep the shawls, and yet send this Herr Meerfeld bootless home. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The same Apartment.*

FREDERICA (*entering*).

I could scarcely eat a morsel at dinner, and even with difficulty restrained my tears. My cousin thinks me no better than a fool; and in truth I do behave in her presence as if I had not common sense—and yet 'tis almost cruel to make such a poor timid creature the object of her wit in presence of a third party. What can Willmar think of me? I could see that after what Juliana said, he was ashamed to take me to the theatre. O! he may make himself easy—I shall not go now, whatever pleasure it might have been under different circumstances.

Enter WIESEL.

WIESEL.

Honoured young lady, may I entreat a word? I have just heard from the cook-maid of Brand, the jeweller, that Herr Freymann is in want of a set of jewels.

FREDERICA.

It may be so; I know nothing about it.

WIESEL.

Why doesn't Herr Freymann in such cases make use of me? I'm no jeweller—no shop-keeper; but if any one wants to make a purchase, the quickest, the cheapest — no matter what—I'm your man. Jewels! why, Lord bless you, who would ever think of going to a jeweller for jewels? Here I have something at my friend's service, and at half their value. (*He takes out a case of jewels*). There—look you there—and be wonder-struck! A certain lady—I may name her to *you*—the Baroness von Brauss, can't forbear giving grand entertainments: and so, like Queen Cleopatra, she has dissolved her pearls in her wine—ha, ha, ha! (*He opens the case.*) Are they not pearls of the purest water?—worth three hundred ducats between brothers, and she'll let them go for a hundred and fifty.

FREDERICA.

If you wish to speak to my uncle, I had better call him.

WIESEL.

One moment, Mamsell Frederica; you know I am not naturally inquisitive—not in the least; but this inquiry about jewels has excited my curiosity, for it agrees with other reports which have lately come to my ears.

FREDERICA.

What reports?

WIESEL.

They say Mamsell Juliana is a bride,* engaged to some Englishman, or Greek, or American, who put up at the Golden Lion this morning.

FREDERICA.

A correspondent of my uncle's, a certain Herr Meerfeld from Hamburg, was expected to dinner to-day, and we know not why he did not make his appearance.

WIESEL.

Do you know whether there is a match in hand between him and Mamsell Juliana?

* In Germany, the lady is a *bride* from the moment she is engaged or betrothed, (verlobt). On the subject of the "Verlobung," which is a peculiar characteristic of German social life and manners, I shall have to enlarge hereafter.

FREDERICA.

I really cannot inform you.

WIESEL.

I will confess to you that, under the excuse of the jewels, I came here more particularly to have a peep at the stranger. I am known everywhere as an old friend of the family, and I shall be questioned on all sides.

FREDERICA.

Well, sir, if you know nothing, I suppose you need say nothing. [*She goes out.*

WIESEL.

Cunning little jade! she won't speak out. But I see it all; Mamsell Juliana is to be married; that will put the Collector Summer in a rage, and Lieutenant Kramer too. If I could but get at some particulars of the affair, it would keep Madame Flieder quiet.

Enter MEERFELD.

MEERFELD.

Have I the honour to see Herr Freymann?

WIESEL (*aside*).

The deuce! he's not of our town—a new face entirely. (*Aloud.*) Herr Freymann, did you say? No, I am not that gentleman, but his oldest and best friend; and so, if you have any business with him——

MEERFELD (*examining him*).

I merely came to pay him a visit.

WIESEL.

May I know your worshipful name?

MEERFELD.

The name doesn't signify.

WIESEL.

Why—yes—very true indeed—the name does not signify, as you say; but I can hardly announce you as Mr. Anonymous—he, he!

MEERFELD.

Then pray tell him, the gentleman he expected is here.

WIESEL.

The gentleman he expects is Herr Meerwald—no, Meerfeld, from Hamburg. And so you are Herr Meerfeld of Hamburg! You see I am informed of everything, and consequently you need not be under any restraint on my account, my dear sir.

MEERFELD.

Not in the least.

WIESEL.

I not only know who you are, but what you are come for.

MEERFELD.

Indeed!

WIESEL.

And upon my word you know what you are about, and no mistake! Mamsell Juliana is a most beautiful young lady, and her father's sole heiress.

MEERFELD.

Be so good as to tell me what *is* your office in this house? (*Aside.*) This fellow is insufferable!

WIESEL.

My office!—the highest—the noblest—the divinest—that of a friend!

MEERFELD.

Ay, indeed!

WIESEL.

A friend, though I say it, who has a heart for his friends' friends; and therefore begs to be allowed the honour of presenting himself as your worship's devoted friend the first time he has the felicity of meeting you in company.

MEERFELD.

Your most obedient.

WIESEL.

No compliments, pray: I hate them deadly.

MEERFELD.

Not worth while.

WIESEL.

You were expected to dinner to-day: how is it we had not the honour of seeing you?

MEERFELD.

I was not invited, that I know of.

WIESEL.

How?—what?—that was a terrible blunder! I know Herr Freymann intended it. I conjure you, my most worthy sir, to pardon the oversight. That's just the way with servants, when one trusts to them. Ay, I will certainly give it to them soundly for this!

MEERFELD.

Are you the master here, then?

WIESEL.

Pardon me; I am, on the contrary, every one's most humble servant.

MEERFELD.

So much the better; for otherwise I should have been obliged to intercede for the domestics, who are in all probability perfectly guiltless in the matter; they did not find me at home, for I have been running about your town for the last four hours.

WIESEL.

Ha! to be sure; that's quite another thing; in that case I have only to lament—

MEERFELD.

And to say no more about it.

WIESEL.

I see you are looking at the case in my hand:

perhaps you would like to know what it contains?

MEERFELD.

Not I.

WIESEL.

I was not to let any one see it; nevertheless, my very dear sir, if you were to request—to ask such a thing——

MEERFELD.

Which I do not.

WIESEL.

If you had the slightest wish——

MEERFELD.

Which I have not; my only wish at this moment is to speak to Herr Freymann.

WIESEL.

Lord bless me! why did not you say so at once? I fly to bring him. [*He goes out.*

MEERFELD.

If I am to make hereafter one of the family, this friend of the family must be off, for certainly I shall not include him in the bargain.

Enter FREYMANN *and* WIESEL.

WIESEL.

There he stands, the long-expected guest.

FREYMANN.

A thousand thousand welcomes, my dear Meer-

feld! I have been waiting your arrival really with a father's impatience. I am sorry you did not receive my invitation to dine with us to-day; but never mind, it does not signify now. I have given orders to have your trunks brought here immediately, and I trust you will make my house your own. Let me look at you. Excellent! capital! capital!—just what I had fancied you in my own mind. Here, Wiesel, be so good as to call my daughter here.

WIESEL.

With pleasure, (*aside*) for so I shall manage to be present at the first interview.

[*He goes out.*

MEERFELD.

This cordial reception makes me easy, my good Herr Freymann! it justifies all that my late father said of you, and I hope we shall soon come to a right understanding.

FREYMANN.

I hope so too; indeed I am so well convinced of it, that I shall not put you off with fair hopes only: we will have the betrothing next Monday.

MEERFELD.

Oh!

FREYMANN (*impatiently*).

Well?

MEERFELD.

I have not yet had the honour of waiting on the young lady.

FREYMANN.

Why, that's true; but she'll be here immediately. Wiesel, I suppose, is chattering by the way, which he might as well defer to another opportunity; for you must be introduced to Juliana at once, if the banns are to be published in church to-morrow.

MEERFELD.

To-morrow!—what can you be thinking of, my dear sir?

FREYMANN.

Why, to-morrow is Sunday: you wouldn't wait a whole week longer?

MEERFELD.

Why not? A week—a fortnight—nay, a month, with all my heart.

FREYMANN.

I don't like delays of any kind. Now we are alone, Meerfeld, listen to me. I will give my daughter eighty thousand dollars, which shall be laid down either in the four per cents. or bills at sight, as you please.

MEERFELD.

I think, my dear sir, it is rather too soon to discuss such matters.

FREYMANN.

Why so?

MEERFELD.

Because—I—I really don't know how I shall tell you.

FREYMANN.

Nay, out with it.

MEERFELD.

A union between your daughter and myself was the wish of my late dear father; and the excellent character I had heard everywhere of you, sir, induced me to acquiesce. I wrote to you therefore. I proposed for your daughter; but let me remind you, on the express condition, that, on a nearer acquaintance, our characters should be found to suit each other.

FREYMANN.

I don't remember a word of it.

MEERFELD.

Be so good as to refer to my letter.

FREYMANN.

Why, Lord bless you, I've burned it long ago! I never suffer old papers to accumulate in my desk; but what matter? I believe you on your word; but I cannot understand your scruples in the least. You please me, and consequently will please my daughter.

MEERFELD.

I am not sure of that.

FREYMANN.

But I am;—and my daughter will please *you*.

MEERFELD.

I am not sure of that either.

FREYMANN.

Sir!

MEERFELD.

Do not be offended. I have not yet seen the young lady.

FREYMANN.

What the plague is that Wiesel about? You are putting me quite out of conceit with the whole thing. I hardly know what I think or say.

MEERFELD.

Wiesel, then, is the name of the gentleman you have just sent in search of your daughter?

FREYMANN.

Yes, truly.

MEERFELD.

Excuse me, but is he a friend of yours?

FREYMANN.

A friend of mine! Lord forbid! What put that into your head? If such friends abounded in the land, we should be obliged to ask the commanding officer for a *cordon sanitaire* to

keep the whole brood at a distance. He's an intrusive, meddling gossip—a hungry parasite —that's all.

MEERFELD.

I'm glad to hear it.

FREYMANN.

Glad to hear what?

MEERFELD.

That he is not your friend, for he's an intolerable bore.

Enter JULIANA.

JULIANA.

Your pardon, my dear father, if I did not come to you immediately; but I was obliged to get rid of that Wiesel, who insisted on coming with me.

FREYMANN.

And you were right there, my dear child.

JULIANA (*in a low voice*).

Who is the stranger?

FREYMANN.

No stranger—a near and dear friend of our family—Herr Meerfeld.

JULIANA (*curtseying*).

Charmed to have the honour——

MEERFELD (*bowing*).

The honour is mine. (*Aside.*) A beautiful creature, faith!

FREYMANN.

Well, how do you like him? eh?— speak, girl.

JULIANA.

My dear father!——

FREYMANN (*to* MEERFELD).

And what do you think of her?

MEERFELD.

My dear sir!——

FREYMANN.

"My dear father," and "My dear sir,"—what do you mean by that?

JULIANA (*politely to* MEERFELD).

You have just arrived from Hamburg? I fear that, compared with your native city, our little town will seem very empty and dull.

MEERFELD.

I cannot deny it.

JULIANA.

We have only one brilliant epoch—that of the fair;* but on that occasion we may almost vie

* The increased rapidity and facility of communication and transport throughout Europe have lately diminished the importance of the periodical fairs in Germany, and the concourse of people who were wont to assemble on these occasions; still, in the smaller cities of Prussia and Saxony, and even at Dresden, Weimar, Naumberg, &c., the season is one of great bustle and brilliancy: . the three principal fairs (Messe or Jahrmarkt) in Germany, are those of Frankfürt, Leipsig, and Brunswick.

with London or Paris. We have specimens of every nation congregated here, and lay both the old and the new world under contribution: 'tis a pity you were not here six weeks ago.

MEERFELD.

It is of no consequence; for I am not come here to see the many, but to learn to know a few.

JULIANA.

You will be horribly *ennuyé*.

MEERFELD.

O no! (*looking at her with a smile*) I shall *observe*.

JULIANA.

I doubt whether you will find anything worthy of observation.

MEERFELD.

Everything is worth observation.

JULIANA.

Indeed! then the honour of exciting your observation is no distinction?

MEERFELD.

None whatever, when such observation leads to nothing farther.

JULIANA (*pointedly*).

In that case, pray honour me with your observation. Are you musical, Herr Meerfeld?

MEERFELD.

I play a little on the violin.

JULIANA.

You love music?

MEERFELD.

From my soul!

JULIANA.

To-morrow there will be a good concert at the Merchants' Hall. I shall not go, but my father will have great pleasure in introducing you.

MEERFELD.

If Herr Freymann will have the goodness—(*turning to him.*)

JULIANA (*aside*).

A most gallant suitor truly!

MEERFELD.

I have heard much of your concerts here.

JULIANA.

I am engaged to-morrow to Hofrath Thieler, to hear the reading of a new tragedy, by a poet of this town.

MEERFELD.

I must confess I do not envy you.

JULIANA.

I shall probably be *ennuyée* to death myself.

MEERFELD.

Then why go?

JULIANA.

I should prefer the concert.

MEERFELD.

Then pray come to the concert: it would add to my gratification.

JULIANA.

I am afraid I cannot, in civility, decline the reading: the Hofrath is an intimate friend of our family. I have, however, the privilege of taking any one I like.

MEERFELD.

I must beg to be excused.

JULIANA (*with quickness*).

I mean acquaintances of course. (*Aside.*) The man is such a clown, he is quite diverting.

FREYMANN.

But, children, can you talk of nothing but concerts and tragedies? I see no end to it, if you are to go on in that fashion: perhaps I am in your way—shall I go?

MEERFELD.

If you would be so obliging!

FREYMANN.

Well, then, I'm gone; but for heaven's sake settle it all quickly: in a quarter of an hour I hope to see you in my study, my dear Meerfeld.

[*He goes out.*

JULIANA *and* MEERFELD.

MEERFELD (*aside*).

Now for it!

JULIANA (*aside*).

He is silent: it is not my part to speak first, I presume.

MEERFELD (*aside*).

There's something about this girl altogether singular—an air of decision—something, in short, which in any other would perhaps have repelled me; but it becomes her. The shortest way is the best: so have at her.* (*Aloud.*) Mamsell!

JULIANA.

Sir?

MEERFELD.

You know, doubtless, why I am here?

JULIANA.

How should I know?

MEERFELD.

Nay, no dissembling, to the point at once—I am come to—to—marry you!

JULIANA.

That is coming to the point indeed.

MEERFELD.

But you understand—not unless you like me!

* The German idiom is hardly translatable: "Ich falle mit der Thüre in's Haus!"

JULIANA.

Young ladies are scarce in Hamburg, I presume?

MEERFELD.

On the contrary, they abound there, as they do everywhere else; but I suppose I am phlegmatic; and then I am always engaged in important business: and so it has happened that I have not yet been in love regularly.

JULIANA.

Then I am the first woman you were ever in love with?

MEERFELD.

Pardon me, I did not say I was in love with *you;* if I had said so, you might with reason have been offended: it would have appeared as if I thought you could believe such a thing. No, (*smiling archly*) I am not *yet* in love with you!

JULIANA.

You have said so once already, sir!

MEERFELD.

Pray allow me to finish what I had to say: I am not yet in love with you, but I feel that I might easily be so, for you please me right well: and now tell me, do I please you?

JULIANA.

That is a most insidious question.

MEERFELD.

Not in the least, if you will speak frankly: neither shall I regard your answer as decisive for at present we can only speak of the general impression my appearance may have made on you.

JULIANA.

You take it for granted, then, that you have made an impression on me?

MEERFELD.

Do not trifle with me thus—I am not used to it, and I do not quite like it.

JULIANA.

You speak plainly enough, I must confess.

MEERFELD.

This sort of conversation is not at all in my way; I shall make no hand of it at all. Let us return to the main point, and as you will not tell me what you think of me, or perhaps do not deem it worth while to think about me at all, let me tell you what I am. You may trust to my description, for I know myself better than any one else knows me, having all my life long thought more than I spoke. I am serious, perhaps rather dull; inflexible in all that regards principle; not much accustomed to female society, and rather rough than courtly; incapable of flattery, and even of concealing my disgust when

I meet with anything unworthy. I feel both warmly and deeply, but I am not in the habit of expressing my feelings, and therefore often appear harsh and cold. I would sacrifice my life for a friend, but I cannot sit and sympathise with him when he has the toothache. In short, I should make a sorry lover, but perhaps a tolerable husband; for, with all my faults, I have a true and an honest heart: and my signature to my marriage contract were at least as sacred as to a bill of exchange. My own tastes would not lead me to take my wife much into fine society, but every pleasure that friendship and art could bestow I would endeavour to assemble round my home. I would keep the reins of domestic government in my own hands, but then I would have my wife for my sole confidant and prime minister. As I would never oppose but from conviction, so I would never yield but from conviction. In conclusion, I would not treat my wife as a divinity when young, even that I might honour her in age. Now I have done. As for my person, you see it is no great things, but neither is it one to scare children; and I am thirty-four next birthday—now speak!

JULIANA (*after a pause*).

Do you require the catalogue of my defects in return for yours!

MEERFELD.

O no—that were a poor price to ask for my sincerity: for I should not suppose you have many faults to confess. There are, however, one or two things I have remarked, which I could wish otherwise.

JULIANA (*ironically*).

Indeed! perhaps you will do me the favour to point them out?

MEERFELD.

You will not be offended with my frankness?

JULIANA.

On the contrary, I request it of you.

MEERFELD.

You are not sincere enough for me, and you have a good deal of vanity.

JULIANA.

A novel style of compliment truly!

MEERFELD.

I was not thinking of paying compliments.

JULIANA.

And can you think of marrying a woman of whom you entertain such an opinion?

MEERFELD.

Why not? I hope to see you changed in some things, if you ever become my wife.

JULIANA.

As I am now, so I shall ever be to the end of my life.

MEERFELD.

Forgive me, but I cannot believe it. Self-improvement should be the aim of all, and will be yours no doubt.

JULIANA.

When I see you bent on the same laudable purpose—perhaps.

MEERFELD.

I am so, on my honour: and therefore if it be the will of Providence that we should be united, I would beg of you to call my attention to my faults and deficiencies, as I should certainly take the liberty of pointing out yours. We should thus both be gainers.

Enter JOHANN.

JOHANN.

Sir, the servant of the Collector Wild is without, and begs to speak to you.

MEERFELD.

Ah, yes, I remember. (*To Juliana.*) With your permission we will resume our conversation half an hour hence.

JULIANA.

Certainly, I have still much to say to you.

[*Meerfeld bows, and goes out, followed by Johann.*

JULIANA.

A very strange man! I declare, for the first

time in my life, I felt almost intimidated; he is rough, unpolished, yet in such an original style, that I was quite thrown out of all my commonplaces. It was absolutely provoking to hear him say in such an indifferent tone that he was not in love with me; however, 'tis better as it is; it will be so much the easier to get rid of him.

Enter WILLMAR.

WILLMAR (*in a tone of irritation*).

So I find you alone at last?

JULIANA.

I have seen and talked to your rival; and have comfortable news for you.

WILLMAR.

Your father has already announced Meerfeld as your bridegroom to the whole household

JULIANA.

Herr Meerfeld will return bootless home to Hamburg in less than a week, for all that.

WILLMAR.

You will discover all to your father then?

JULIANA.

I! heaven forbid!

WILLMAR.

Or perhaps to Meerfeld himself?

JULIANA.

Still less.

WILLMAR.

Juliana! what do you mean to do?

JULIANA.

That is my secret; you are to know nothing about it. Be satisfied with the assurance that this stranger shall not be my husband, happen what may.

WILLMAR.

O possibly Lieutenant Kramer may have a better chance!

JULIANA.

What do you mean?

WILLMAR.

Your father let fall a few words this morning, which have given rise to some reflections.

JULIANA.

Is it possible you can doubt me, Willmar?

WILLMAR.

Why should I not doubt you?

JULIANA.

Willmar! you offend me!

WILLMAR.

I'm sorry——

JULIANA.

Methinks that a woman who has sacrificed such brilliant prospects for the sake of the man she prefers, deserves his confidence at least.

WILLMAR.

And does not that tender father, who never refused his daughter's slightest wish, deserve to hear the truth from her?

JULIANA.

Ungrateful! what am I to understand by this? For whose sake have I prevailed on myself to deceive my father?

WILLMAR.

For mine—perhaps——

JULIANA.

Perhaps?

WILLMAR.

Mistrust is the bitter fruit of falsehood. I love you, Juliana; I would give the universe to believe in you; but alas! your words have no longer power to convince me. I know how little a false assertion costs you, and more than once I have doubted whether love for me be really the motive of your conduct.

JULIANA.

I do not in the least comprehend you.

WILLMAR.

It seems to me, Juliana, that with true love, truth had been the breath of life. If you had really felt what you pretended to feel, you had not stooped to intrigue and deception—you had not been ashamed of your preference for a poor

but honest man—you would have thrown yourself at once into your father's arms, and he—O you heard what he said this morning—he would have united us, and we should now have been at the summit of our wishes, without guilt or reproach.

JULIANA (*struggling with her emotion*).

There is some difference between a hasty expression from his lips and his signature to a marriage contract. My father thought he might say this morning anything that came into his head, regarding me already as the bride of Meerfeld.

WILLMAR.

No—any one might have seen that he spoke from the heart; and that *you* could have heard him so unmoved, pained me to the soul.

JULIANA.

Willmar, you really assume a singular tone towards me; however, I must forgive you, for you are jealous, poor man!

WILLMAR.

Perhaps—a little;—but that is not what most occupies me at this moment.

JULIANA.

Then *what* is it?

WILLMAR.

O Juliana! I would rather, far rather, see you

false to me than to yourself! I would rather not dare to love you, than feel that I *could* not love you!—the peace, the happiness of my future life are in your hands. By my deep love for you, I do conjure you, grant me one request!

JULIANA.

You alarm me with your vehemence; but speak —what is it?

WILLMAR.

O let the falsehood uttered this morning be the last! Let our fate be what it may, we shall have courage, I trust, to bear it. Happiness unmerited is shame and disgrace; while no calamity undeserved can absolutely degrade us.

JULIANA.

What a gloomy moralist you have turned on a sudden!—really, any one to hear you would think that I was a cheat and a liar by profession;* and all this about one or two trifling white lies†—told for your sake too! And then, as regards the rest of my conduct, it was prudent, not false; and I defy Lieutenant Kramer to say I ever uttered a word which gave him reason to hope. I gave him no more encouragement

* Dass ich lebte und webte nur in Lug und Trug, is the peculiar German idiom.

† in German, Nothlügen.

than was absolutely necessary to put those who suspected our love on a wrong scent.

WILLMAR.

You *did* give him encouragement, then? Another victim of deceit and artifice?—O Juliana!

JULIANA.

Herr Willmar, I must say you use very harsh expressions; but I know why you are so inexorably stern—you love me no longer. There *was* a time when these little artifices showed only as proofs of my love, and when my wilfulness was but a charm in your eyes. That time is past, and now you exaggerate my faults merely to excuse your own inconstancy.

WILLMAR.

You can doubt me?

JULIANA.

To be sure—doubts are the fashion, it seems; allow me to have my doubts too.

WILLMAR.

You were my first, as you are my only love; I know not how I could endure to lose you. The change of which you accuse me is in my mind, not in my heart. I know the world better than I did, and have had occasion, as a man, to observe the lamentable result of errors which, when a mere youth, did not strike me; that turn

for trifling intrigue may in time become treachery and falsehood; and that mockery of every serious subject, heartless indifference. O Juliana! listen to the warning voice of a true friend; walk in the path I have resolved to take: let it lead where it will—the *end* is peace.

JULIANA (*trying to smile*).

Upon my word, your sentimentality becomes almost infectious.

WILLMAR.

You are touched; O do not strive against this better feeling! Promise me—give me your hand on it—that the lie of this morning shall be the last from your lips!

JULIANA (*withdrawing her hand*).

Lie! what an odious vulgar expression!

WILLMAR.

You would willingly laugh away the feeling I have awakened in your heart, but you shall not; your hand, Juliana!

JULIANA.

Well, then, there it is: to confess the truth, I hardly know myself how the knot is to be disentangled; but so let it be—no more fibs!

Enter FREYMANN, (*who stops short at the door, as Willmar seizes Juliana's offered hand, and presses it to his lips*).

WILLMAR.

You know not all you have done for me; now I have courage to face anything. I fly to your father—I will throw myself at his feet—acknowledge my error, and confess my love!

JULIANA (*uneasily*).

Willmar!

FREYMANN (*coming forward*).

Ha! what the plague, what's all this? Francis! can it be you? I took you for Meerfeld—the situation would certainly have become him better.

WILLMAR.

O hear me, Herr Freymann!

FREYMANN.

Not a word—I have heard too much already. Shame! I never could have believed it!—what, deceive your benefactor, your second father, and attempt an intrigue behind his back with his own daughter? Had you acted with integrity, I should have thought you not unworthy of being my son, but now I should disdain you as a common acquaintance. Hence! and if ever we meet again, let it be as if we had never seen or known each other!

JULIANA.

My dear father, you mistake.

FREYMANN.

And you—dissembler that you are—you would

have married Meerfeld! If you loved another, you ought to have spoken sooner. Mistake! why, did I not hear you talking of love?

JULIANA.

Herr Willmar—was only—only speaking to me of his love for—my cousin Frederica;—and I was merely promising him my support and interest.

FREYMANN (*taking breath*).

His love for Frederica! Francis loves Frederica! Now heaven be praised 'tis no worse;—but it was a horrible suspicion: I tremble yet in every limb.

WILLMAR.

Herr Freymann, think of me as you will—I must——

JULIANA (*in a low voice*).

Be silent—or see me married to Meerfeld in a week. (*To Freymann.*) He was afraid of confessing his love to you, because Frederica is your niece, and his parents are poor.

FREYMANN.

Do you think me a fool, young man? What could I wish better for my niece than such a husband as yourself? Why, I could dance for joy in my old age! One moment—I shall be back again instantly; don't stir—you shall have her, my boy—you shall have her! [*Hurries out.*

WILLMAR.

What is he going to do? I must follow.

JULIANA.

Stay where you are—I have tangled the knot, and I must loose it. All will yet be well—that sudden thought was help in our utmost need.

WILLMAR (*turning from her*).

The need was better than the help.

Enter FREYMANN, *leading* FREDERICA.

Come along, Frederica—here's strange news for you! I am going to send you away, Frederica—out of my house, girl!

FREDERICA.

Uncle!

FREYMANN.

Ay, here's the man who insists on carrying you off from us!—here's a lover, a husband for you, Frederica!

WILLMAR.

For heaven's sake, sir!

JULIANA.

My dear father, you are really too quick for us all: let me speak to Frederica—leave me alone with her; I'll question her.

FREYMANN.

Why alone, pray? I don't see the meaning or the use of it.—Frederica, my girl, Willmar loves

you—wishes to marry you—what do you say to it? there's the question put at once.

FREDERICA (*in the utmost confusion and astonishment.*)

Willmar! O no—impossible!

FREYMANN.

'Tis true, I tell you—he told me so himself: did you know nothing of his love till this moment?

FREDERICA.

I never had the slightest suspicion of it.

FREYMANN.

Bravo, my good Francis! right honest and honourable, and like you—to win the uncle before you wooed the niece;—right, that was the way in the good old times:—but what's the matter, Frederica? you look confounded.

FREDERICA.

It is *so* astonishing!

FREYMANN.

But not disagreeable—eh? come, come, I will not have my Francis rejected.

FREDERICA.

It is not come to that, dear uncle; give me, O give me time to think!

FREYMANN.

Tears—tears, Frederica!—that is at once the

most becoming, and the most intelligible of all answers; if you did not like him, the eyes would have been idle, but the tongue would have wagged fast enough. I will give you three thousand dollars for your portion, and your trousseau besides: come with me and choose yourself a couple of gowns. As Juliana will not give Meerfeld his answer* yet, to punish her, you shall have the first choice—come to my room: and you Madam Shilly-shally (*to Juliana*) must be content with what your cousin leaves.

[*Leads Frederica out.*

WILLMAR.

There—see what you have done!

JULIANA.

No harm, some good rather—for poor Frederica is in a fair way to have a couple of new gowns, which I am heartily glad of with all my heart.

WILLMAR.

You think, then, to heal the insulted feelings of an amiable girl with a fashionable gown?

JULIANA.

Nonsense, she's too childish—she has no feelings to be insulted.

* *Answer* does not render the beautiful expression for this and similar occasions—jawort, literally "*Yea-word.*"

WILLMAR.

You have hitherto held your cousin in such contemptuous dependence, that you can know nothing of her feelings.

JULIANA.

I know thus much, that I should not have allowed the jest to go so far, if I did not know her to be a mere nonentity.

WILLMAR.

Juliana, your opinion of your cousin will not prevent me from instantly undeceiving both her and your father.

JULIANA.

Take care what you do!

WILLMAR.

I have already told you that my obedience is at an end.

JULIANA.

You forget that I hold the power of vengeance in my own hands.

WILLMAR.

And you forget what you promised me half an hour ago.

JULIANA.

Willmar! you are absolutely metamorphosed!

WILLMAR.

And you, Juliana, appear in no favourable light, I assure you.

JULIANA.

I knew not how mightily interested you were about Frederica.

WILLMAR.

And I knew not that there was a female heart in the world capable of sporting so cruelly with innocence and poverty.

JULIANA.

I don't think the girl knows whether she has a heart or not.

WILLMAR.

That is not my business to inquire; and even if it were so, it would not release me from a duty which I—I regret I must say it—am resolved to fulfil in any case.

JULIANA.

What do you mean to do?

WILLMAR.

I will reveal everything.

JULIANA.

And if I renounce you?

WILLMAR.

You will renounce an honest heart—that's all.

JULIANA.

Willmar! do you desire to break with me—really?

WILLMAR.

Better so, than to attain happiness by such crooked means. [*Exit.*

JULIANA.

Contradictory, headstrong man that he is! there he goes—to risk the whole sum-total of our happiness upon one cast, and that out of mere obstinacy and sophistry. I must follow him, and prevent him from going to my father; if I can only hinder him from speaking to him for to-day—night brings good counsel*—perhaps he will think better of it to-morrow.

* This is a German proverb: Die nacht bringt Rath.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The same Apartment.*

JULIANA *alone.*

I never closed my eyes all night;—'twas lucky that the prince sent for Willmar, and so all further talk was avoided: for, before he returned, I got Frederica off to the theatre: but what is delayed is not done,* and I must settle the business at once, or Willmar's abrupt honesty will bring me into a scrape. I don't understand his exaggerated ideas. It is possible that his proposal may have pleased Frederica: it is the first, I fancy, in her whole life; but that's no reason why she should be in love with him: and yet—I don't know how it is—I am ill at ease. My wits won't fail me at a pinch; but I am getting entangled in my own net; I can't deny it; and I am bound to ask myself if I have acted thus from actual ne-

* The German proverb is "Aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben."

cessity? Willmar thinks not—Willmar let me know plainly enough that he thinks I have a turn for intrigue. The expression vexed me; I cannot easily forgive him for it; but at the same time, when I reflect on myself, I cannot but confess a certain pleasure in such harmless plotting: it amuses me to exercise my superior wit, and to get the better of inferior minds; and it is thus I have accustomed myself to this vile trick of fibbing, which is detestable after all, and which I *will* get the better of—will lay aside for ever—that is, as soon as I have got rid of this Meerfeld. I sent to tell him I wished to speak to him this morning, as I could not wait his return yesterday: he might have been here already. As the man confesses he does not love me, it is plainly my fortune which tempts him. It would be a good thing to hint that my father is threatened with bankruptcy—he will retreat of course, and as soon as he finds out the truth, I will declare that I only wished to try him, because I could never love any man who thought only of my dowry. This shall absolutely be the last deviation from truth I will allow myself: it is necessary, and can do no possible harm to any one.*

* This long soliloquy, in which Juliana is more sincere with herself than she ever is with others, and dramatic soliloquies in

Enter MEERFELD.

MEERFELD.

You inquired for me, Mamsell Juliana?—I am here at your service.

general, I have heard censured as unnatural, or at least so unusual as to be inadmissible, except on the plea of necessity, and as the only means by which we can be let into the mind of the speaker; however, the fact is, that soliloquy *is* natural, and not so unusual as many people suppose. Not only are children of all ages found talking to themselves, but grown-up persons, under the influence of any strong excitement, which for a time overpowers the self-command arising from inculcated habits of reserve and mistrust, fall into soliloquy. I have frequently seen the Chippewa Indians talking and gesticulating to themselves. In one of Goethe's novels, the catastrophe arises from a revelation made by the hero when unconsciously soliloquising: this was criticised as absolutely grotesque and unnatural. Goethe might have been trusted as one who knew all qualities with a learned spirit. The fact is, he drew from himself, and had, besides, another example of the same in a near relative. Goethe was in the habit of walking up and down his room, and talking audibly to himself, and was not pleased to be overheard or observed.

One evening—it was summer-time, and about sunset, when the streets are nearly deserted—I was walking up Portland Place, and before me walked a lady perfectly well dressed, and leading a little child of four or five years old; she was speaking audibly—in fact, soliloquising,—reproaching herself bitterly for some mistake committed, and settling a plan of operations, by which she would engage a brother to do something she required. She went through an imaginary conversation: "He will say So and so;—then I will say So and so," perfectly coherent, and well and even eloquently expressed.

JULIANA.

I thank you for your punctuality. Herr Meerfeld, will you pardon me for running away from you yesterday? I had an engagement to tea—was obliged to dress.

MEERFELD.

Make no ceremony with me. I trust we shall see enough of each other in the course of our lives, not to grudge a quarter of an hour one way or another.

JULIANA.

That is just the question.

MEERFELD.

Question!—why should it be a question? Look you, I feel nothing but kindness towards you:*—a more agreeable man you might easily find, but not a truer heart; and if, as I am assured, your affections are free, I cannot conceive why you should reject my hand.

JULIANA (*seriously*).

My doubts have nothing to do with the state of my heart.

* This phrase ill expresses the cordial German Ich bin Ihnen herzlich gut! ich würde Sie den Händen tragen! But to translate more literally were to make honest Meerfeld say much more than he feels or means, which, however true to the literal sense, were false to the character.

MEERFELD.

If your understanding is to decide, I have no fears.

JULIANA.

It is an affair of conscience. Permit me to ask you one thing, Herr Meerfeld?

[*At this moment Wiesel opens a door softly, and looks in; but on seeing Meerfeld and Juliana, draws back; he remains, however, listening, unperceived by them, during the remainder of the scene, his head appearing from time to time through the half open door.*

When you proposed to me, you believed me a rich heiress—did you not?

MEERFELD.

True, I did.

JULIANA.

And this belief was the real cause of your proposal—was it not?

MEERFELD.

Partly, I confess it; for do you see, I cannot lie for the soul of me!

JULIANA.

You would not have chosen me, then, had I been poor?

MEERFELD.

Hardly, for in that case I had not been here.

JULIANA.

You have no objection to money, I see: you think a good fortune a good thing?

MEERFELD.

Why, money is not to be despised, as we in trade know full well; but on this point make yourself easy; I am not covetous, and regard riches as an instrument, not an object. I am not such a bad calculator, believe me, as to sacrifice my happiness or my inclinations for money. If you did not please me, I would not take you with all your fortune.

JULIANA (*smiling*).

I have the honour to please you, then?

MEERFELD.

You *do* please me.

JULIANA.

Yet you say you are not in love with me?

MEERFELD.

I suspect I am on the high road to it.

JULIANA.

Then it becomes my duty to tell you, ere the blow fall, that my father is on the eve of bankruptcy.

MEERFELD.

Bankruptcy!—impossible!—you jest!

JULIANA.

It is hardly a subject for jesting, Herr Meerfeld!

MEERFELD.

But, great Heaven!—what can have happened so suddenly?

JULIANA.

It has not happened suddenly: he had terrible losses some time ago, and then ensued the failure of a great house at Frankfort. He kept these circumstances secret, and hoped in time to recover them; but the splendid establishment he has been obliged to keep up for the sake of concealing his embarrassments has completely ruined him; and now things have gone so far, that he must close his accounts.

MEERFELD.

Are you certain of what you say?

JULIANA.

I have it from my father's lips.

MEERFELD (*walking up and down*).

It does not please me,—it does not please me at all!

JULIANA.

That I can easily believe.

MEERFELD.

That he should not think proper to divulge his embarrassed circumstances, I can understand—but to me!—surely he might have treated *me* fairly and honestly.

JULIANA.

Forgive him this reserve: you can conceive that his last dependence was on his rich son-in-law.

MEERFELD.

Worse and worse!

JULIANA.

It does not sound well, I confess.

MEERFELD (*after a pause*).

I thank you, Mamsell Juliana, for this communication; but I could almost wish you had not made it.

JULIANA.

Why so?

MEERFELD.

I must give up all thought of marrying you.

JULIANA.

Of course—I understand.

MEERFELD.

No—do not *mis*understand me, Juliana. I cannot endure it. Now that I have seen you—that your charms have touched my heart—it is not the loss of your fortune that would prevent my persisting in my suit—no; but your father has not treated me well—has not acted towards me as a man of honour, and therefore cannot be my father-in-law. I take my leave (*he kisses her hand with emotion*) with a sad heart—(*he goes*

towards the door, then returns, and kisses her hand once more)—farewell!

[*He hurries out—a pause—Juliana looks after him anxiously.*

JULIANA.

Well, I have accomplished my object. I ought to be satisfied, and am *not*—far from it. The man almost made me tremble, and I could have sunk with shame; and then that he should go and think unworthily of my father;—that error at least I will not leave him long.

[*As she is going, Wiesel creeps into the room with a sort of cat-like precaution.*

What brings you here, Herr Wiesel?

WIESEL (*bowing*).

Only come to pay my respectful compliments, and ask after your health; also to inquire if I can have the honour of waiting on Herr Freymann?

JULIANA (*going to the door*).

Johann!

Enter JOHANN.

Do you know where my father is?*

* In addressing the servant, Juliana uses the third person singular Er, only adopted towards inferiors and domestics, and not generally used even in this case.

JOHANN.

He is still in his dressing-room, and the door locked.

JULIANA.

In his dressing-room! and it is nearly nine o'clock!

JOHANN.

I brought him a letter from the post this morning at six o'clock, and since then no one has seen him: he has not even rung for breakfast.

JULIANA.

Knock at his door, and announce Herr Wiesel. (*Johann goes*). (*Aside.*) I am in a fit mood indeed to listen to his idle gossip. [*Exit.*

WIESEL.

Herr Freymann—bankrupt! I am in a cold perspiration all over. Bankrupt!—what a horrid word, and not good German either: another proof that all mischief comes from foreign parts. Herr Freymann (*sinking his voice*) bankrupt! Who in the wide world is to be trusted? Lucky for me that I am the first to know it. Listening in the doorway is no bad thing at times. I don't know why it should be thought wrong, for my part—it is only one's laudable anxiety after truth; and this time it will be, perhaps, the saving of my little income,* and of use to my

* Mein bischen Armuth,—literally, *my bit of poverty.*

friends beside; for, as soon as I have my own twenty thousand dollars safe, I will warn the Baroness Barnow, Fraülein von Werneck, and the old Landrath Sturm,* who I know have money in Freymann's hands.

Enter FREYMANN.

FREYMANN (*rather out of humour*).

You inquired for me, Herr Wiesel? If your visit has anything to do with business, I am at your service,—otherwise I must beg to be excused.

WIESEL (*fawningly*).

My most important business is to inquire after the health of my respected friend.

FREYMANN.

I'm quite well, thank you.

WIESEL.

My dear sir, are you sure of it? You have a frown on your brow—a certain twitch of your eyebrows, which does not please me.

FREYMANN.

Those who have their heads full of business cannot escape anxious moments; the idle and empty-headed can always go about with a smooth

* Landrath is a provincial office of some importance in Germany.

brow. And so, if you came here only to make notes on my physiognomy——

WIESEL.

Excuse me, I came to speak on another, but far less interesting affair.

FREYMANN.

Speak, then.

WIESEL.

About my poor twenty thousand dollars.

FREYMANN.

You have received your half year's interest?

WIESEL.

Yes, I believe for the last time.

FREYMANN.

How mean you?

WIESEL.

I wish to withdraw my capital.

FREYMANN.

So suddenly?

WIESEL.

I think of buying a little estate. You see, my very good Herr Freymann, these times make one uneasy: if one has a few dollars, one finds it safest to invest them in land, which at least stands fast—no one can run away with it.

FREYMANN.

I hear no talk of war: the last advices confirm the peace.

WIESEL.

That may be a feint, my dear sir. So just have the goodness to tell down my twenty thousand dollars: to any other banker such a sudden demand might be perplexing; but for you, twenty thousand dollars are, I know, a mere beggarly trifle.

FREYMANN.

Twenty thousand dollars at once!—even for me the sum is not quite insignificant.

WIESEL.

Why, it cannot ruin you?

FREYMANN.

No, no; but have you seriously made up your mind?

WIESEL.

To purchase land?—yes. I intend to live for the beauties of nature—quite rural: I shall set up a brewery.

FREYMANN.

Take time to reflect.

WIESEL.

Time to reflect! This is the first time I ever heard you give such advice to any one; but perhaps my request is particularly unseasonable?

FREYMANN.

I am ready to meet it, of course; but you are in no great hurry, I presume?

WIESEL.

Excuse me; in a most prodigious hurry.

FREYMANN.

Well, you shall have it immediately. (*Aside.*) I must not let the fool know that his demand could never have come at a worse time.

[*He goes out.*

WIESEL.

Ay, it's all true—he's bankrupt. I must warn my friends instantly. [*He goes out.*

SCENE II.—*Frederica's room; on one side there is a small bookcase, with several books; on the other a table with work and writing materials; near the window, glasses containing faded flowers.*

Enter WILLMAR.

WILLMAR.

She is not here; she must be at church still. I have a moment to collect myself: and truly it is no light matter to have to tell an amiable and respectable girl that one does not like her well enough to marry her. What can I say? I shall never know how to begin, nor what words to use: she was so agitated when her uncle spoke of my supposed love for her!—Poor Frederica! —I think perhaps she might love me, and truly,

if I tried to win her love; and to what am I about to sacrifice her?—to a blind passion, which, I feel it to-day more than ever, can never, never conduce to the happiness of my life: but neither is Frederica the wife for me, after all. Mere good-nature, without intelligence or education, would make a marriage of peace, but it would be the peace of the tomb. (*He looks round.*) I wonder what her occupations are when alone—(*he goes to the book-case*)—"The Roman History," History of Germany," Essays on Natural History," Geography," and a map beside it. She seems to have a turn for study, and serious study too;—but what's this? Schiller's "Wallenstein," and his "Maid of Orleans?" Indeed! the masterpieces of our literature are not unknown to her; she enjoys them here alone, and is modestly silent while Juliana amuses herself with jests on her ignorance. (*Opens a book.*) Passages marked with her pencil, I see. (*He replaces the book thoughtfully, and goes to the table and seats himself.*) Her embroidery, (*taking it up,*) how beautiful and delicate!—her account-book—(*opens it, then opens another*)—and this, "Extraits de l'Histoire Romaine." Ha! she not only reads, but she understands well what she reads, and writes French fluently. (*Rising.*) I know not which is most admirable, the studious industry

of this girl, who, while she faithfully discharges her duties, finds time to cultivate her mind, or the modest concealment of her own talents.

Enter CHRISTINE: *she has a bouquet of flowers in her hand: after looking at Willmar attentively, she smiles and curtsies.*

CHRISTINE.

I beg pardon, sir; I have the honour to see Herr Willmar, I believe?

WILLMAR.

How do you know my name?

CHRISTINE.

In Mamsell Frederica's own room what other young man could I expect to find but her bridegroom?

WILLMAR (*with a start*).

Her bridegroom!—(*Aside.*) So it is already all over the house.

CHRISTINE.

You do not mean to make a secret of it, sir? You are to be married in a week, Herr Freymann says. Do pray tell me how it has all been settled so quick.

WILLMAR.

It is—it was—but you seem to take an interest in Frederica.

CHRISTINE.

I was her nurse—I brought her up, God bless her! Ah, Herr Willmar, you are a happy man! you have won a treasure—a very jewel! I know Frederica's heart better than any one in the world, and I can tell you what she is—an angel! You see me, sir, a poor old woman, almost helpless, and yet I am always comfortably dressed, and never know cold or hunger; for Mamsell Frederica sometimes sits up all night to work for my support.

WILLMAR.

Has she not a kind uncle?

CHRISTINE.

O, but she will not have me receive alms from any one; so she says.

WILLMAR.

Excellent, noble creature!

CHRISTINE.

You didn't know *that* of her, did you? O how I have wept to be such a burthen to her! Often I wished that I could die, that she might be rid of me; but now it is all over. Heaven took pity on us, and has rewarded the dear child as I scarcely dared to hope. How I long to see her!—How happy she will be!—for I know how her heart was towards you—I saw it long ago.

WILLMAR.

Indeed!

CHRISTINE.

I don't think she was conscious of it herself, dear child! And so, sir, just imagine my astonishment, when I was at early prayers this morning, to hear the banns published.

WILLMAR.

What banns?

CHRISTINE.

Why yours and Mamsell Frederica's, to be sure. The old gentleman gave directions yesterday evening, as I learned afterwards.

WILLMAR (*aside*).

Just like him! fatal precipitancy!

CHRISTINE.

Well, I was all over hot and cold in a moment, and then I began to weep; so that everybody in church turned round to look at me.

WILLMAR (*aside*).

And yet who knows? it may be a hint from heaven.

CHRISTINE.

As soon as church was over, I ran home, and gathered all the flowers in my flower-pots, that I might decorate her little room here. I think I hear her.

[*She goes to the window, throws out the*

faded flowers, and begins to arrange the others in the empty glasses.

WILLMAR (*aside*).

She is coming—what can I say or do? I *must* have a moment to think.

[*He steps aide, so as to be concealed by the window curtain.*

Enter FREDERICA.

CHRISTINE (*meeting her*).

At last! my dear, sweet Frederica! I have heard strange news—wonderful things, my child! but how are you?—what do you say to it all?—you find here—(*she looks round*)—why, what has become of him?

FREDERICA.

Of whom?

CHRISTINE.

Your bridegroom, Herr Willmar.

FREDERICA.

Was *he* here?

CHRISTINE.

He was talking to me a minute ago—a strange man! He must have vanished just when I was putting the flowers in the glasses.

FREDERICA.

Do you know him, then?

CHRISTINE.

O he told me who he was, and we talked an immensity.*

FREDERICA.

And what did he say?

CHRISTINE.

O! a great deal—but I don't exactly remember what.

FREDERICA (*with a melancholy smile*).

You had all the talk to yourself, I suspect, my good Christine.

CHRISTINE.

O no, indeed!—he said—he said—just what he ought to say.

FREDERICA.

Did he look pleased, or the contrary?

CHRISTINE.

I dare say he might be a little vexed not to find you here, but he will come back directly; and meantime you will tell me everything. I am quite anxious to know how it all happened: when did Willmar declare his love for you?

FREDERICA.

He never declared his love—he never uttered one word of it to me.

* Wir sprachen ein Langes und Breites! is the German idiom.

CHRISTINE.

That is most unaccountable, and yet you are his bride.

FREDERICA.

His bride! O no! I do not yet consider myself as such.

CHRISTINE.

But, for heaven's sake, how is it?

FREDERICA.

My uncle called me yesterday into the drawing-room, where I found Willmar and Juliana. He told me that Willmar loved me, and had offered me his hand. I know not how I felt at the moment; the fright, and I believe the joy too, struck me speechless. I trembled, and burst into tears: my uncle understood my tears to signify consent—drew me into his own room—forced on me the most beautiful presents of dresses and ornaments. Meantime Prince Adolphus sent to command Willmar's attendance; and, half an hour before the usual hour, my cousin Juliana dragged me in a manner to the theatre, whence I did not return till very late. And that is all I can tell you of the matter.

CHRISTINE.

That is certainly quite a new style of match-making.

FREDERICA.

Alas, Christine! my good uncle, I fear, has again been in too great a hurry; he is so quick with everything: he loves Willmar, he feels kindly towards me; what he wished, he persuaded himself to believe, and on this supposition he has acted.

CHRISTINE.

And must I then lock up all my joy again?* It cannot be—the banns have already been published.

FREDERICA.

Yes, as I heard with terror.

CHRISTINE.

And why with terror?

FREDERICA.

Because, till now, I have been unobserved, unknown; I am now rendered an object of remark, only to be, at the same time, an object of ridicule,

CHRISTINE.

Ridicule!—if you are married to Herr Willmar! And, after all, he must marry you—he cannot go back.

FREDERICA.

And do you, Christine, think me base enough

* This is a Germanism—" Meine frende wieder in den Schrank spenen."

to accept his hand, unless assured of his love? and—(*in a melancholy tone*)—he does not love me.

CHRISTINE.

And why should he not love you, I should like to know?

FREDERICA.

As long as I never dreamed of such a thing, I was tranquil, and even happy; but all is changed now. One moment of hope that I might possess such a heart, has destroyed my peace for ever.

WILLMAR (*suddenly steps forward in uncontrollable emotion, and snatches her hand, which he presses to his lips.*

'Tis yours, and wholly yours—this erring heart! —generous, noble girl, I offer it to you—O deign to sanctify it, to heal its wounds!—And now to my benefactor, to thank him on my knees for the gem he has bestowed on me.

[*He rushes out; Frederica stands breathless, gazing on him, and then throws herself into Christine's arms.*

The curtain falls.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*A Room in Freymann's House.*

FREDERICA *is discovered putting the room in order.*

Now all is ready: every thing goes on well with me to-day, because I am *so* happy! Good Willmar! I feel now how long I have loved him. He is secretary to the Prince—is well off in the world, and might have had his choice among the richest and fairest of our town—and he has chosen the poor Frederica! No, never will I forget it in my whole life, which shall be devoted henceforth to make him as happy as he deserves.

Enter JULIANA.

JULIANA.

Good morning, Frederica!—blushes! and sparkling triumph in your eyes! what's the matter?

FREDERICA (*suddenly abashed*).

I was not aware——

JULIANA.

Have you seen Willmar?

FREDERICA.

Yes, a few minutes ago.

JULIANA.

Soh! and did he say anything?

FREDERICA.

Only a few words.

JULIANA (*examining her*).

And you are satisfied, Frederica?

FREDERICA.

Surely—why not?

JULIANA.

You are a reasonable, good girl: but you shall be no loser by it;—I will provide for you; I will share my dowry with you, if need be, to get you a good husband——

FREDERICA.

Have I not, poor as I am, already found one?

JULIANA.

Found a husband! who—in the name of goodness?

FREDERICA.

The only man whom I would ever have accepted; the man whom I suspect you yourself have obtained for me. Am I not Willmar's bride?

JULIANA.

My dear Frederica, hear me: this affair with Willmar seems a little doubtful still; what did he say to you?—tell me plainly.

FREDERICA (*looking down*).

He told me that—that he loved me—that his heart was wholly mine.

JULIANA.

He told you that?

FREDERICA.

Why should he not?

JULIANA (*suppressing her vexation*).

To be sure he should—he ought to say no less, and I only wish that I could be sure there was no mistake in the case.

FREDERICA.

I could not misunderstand his words.

JULIANA.

Tell me, Frederica—do you really love Willmar?

FREDERICA.

I was not sure of it till to-day.

JULIANA.

And before yesterday you had never thought of him?

FREDERICA.

O yes, I thought of him constantly from the first moment I knew him—but I did not suppose—I dared not hope—I did not imagine——

[*She stops in confusion.*

JULIANA.

Well—'tis all very well—but you are wanted below; all the servants are calling after you.

FREDERICA (*approaches Juliana timidly*).

I found you here yesterday with Willmar when your father led me into the room;—if you had any share in bringing this about, be glad to know that you have secured the happiness of my life.

[*She presses Juliana's hand to her lips, and goes out.*

JULIANA.

What can all this mean?—is it possible that Willmar——? I must speak to him—I must have it cleared up:* ah heaven! he is here!

Enter WILLMAR (*who starts back on seeing her*).

JULIANA.

Pray come in, Herr Willmar—whom were you seeking?

* "Ich muss Licht haben,"—literally, "I must have light."

WILLMAR.

Your father—I found his door locked.

JULIANA.

And what do you want with my father?

WILLMAR.

I wished to thank him——

JULIANA (*ironically*).

For giving you Frederica, I suppose?

WILLMAR.

I feel the full value of the gift, believe me.

JULIANA.

Willmar, I am not pleased with you; a jest may be carried so far as to become too serious at last. You reproached me yesterday with the falsehood, inconsiderately uttered, on the spur of the moment, and accused me of cruelty to Frederica; do you make no scruple now to confirm this poor girl in her error—and in cold blood too?

WILLMAR.

What error? is it not in consequence of your own words, spoken in my name, and which I had not the courage to contradict, that Frederica is now my acknowledged bride? and assuredly I am not such a wretch as to abandon a woman under such circumstances.

JULIANA.

Willmar!

WILLMAR.

Your father has proclaimed to every one my supposed declaration, and the banns have been asked in church.

JULIANA.

And you are, like all your sex, faithless: you love Frederica, or have taken a sort of fancy to her, and are glad to find some excuse for ending a liaison of which you were tired—is it not so?

WILLMAR.

Juliana, it was hard, very hard, to tear my heart from you—and that self-inflicted wound is still bleeding, still aching; but do not accuse me of inconstancy: so completely had your charms entangled me, that even on this last occasion I might again—as before—have sacrificed duty to love: 'twas yourself alone gave me power to be free—by destroying the ideal excellence I had worshipped in my heart.

JULIANA.

And pray is Frederica now this fair ideal excellence?

WILLMAR.

I have learned to know Frederica—she is not the ignorant, silly creature you suppose her; and if she do not aim at dazzling the imagination,

she is not the less capable of forming the permanent happiness of a true-hearted man.

JULIANA.

In other words, she will make an excellent cook and housekeeper.

WILLMAR.

And a *friend*, Juliana—a friend, when the illusions of youth are over.

JULIANA.

Upon my word, Willmar, you grow quite prosaic: well, I wish you joy of your paradise of pantries and nurseries, in which I fancy I see the venerable couple—spectacles on nose—Ha! ha! ha! [*Forcing a laugh.*

WILLMAR.

Do not mock that humble happiness for which you may one day sigh in vain. Juliana, I once truly loved you; listen to the prayer of a friend, to whom your destiny can never be indifferent. You have beauty, talents—you are not ill-natured —O be but true, that I may still confess with pride that you were my heart's first love.

JUILANA (*struggling with her emotion*).

Quite unnecessary—I think it will be better in future to treat each other as if we were entire strangers. [*She bursts into tears.*

WILLMAR.

You weep!

JULIANA.

Yes—but—but not for you. I always cry when I'm angry, and you say such disagreeable things! Go, sir! leave me for heaven's sake—I choose to be alone.

Enter FREYMANN.

FREYMANN.

Are you there, Francis, and you, Juliana?—I am glad I find you both together: I wished to speak to you, children—but on no pleasant subject.

JULIANA.

What is it, papa?

FREYMANN.

Do you know or suspect anything already, my child?—you seem agitated.

JULIANA.

I know of nothing whatever.

FREYMANN.

Well, I will not keep you in suspense with a long preface—better to be knocked on the head than racked. I am on the eve of bankruptcy!

WILLMAR.

What do you say?

JULIANA.

Is it possible?

FREYMANN.

It is even so. I grieve for you, my Juliana, for who knows if Meerfeld will not now be off? I grieve for you, Francis, for I am no longer able to give a dower to Frederica: but most I grieve for myself, who, without any fault of my own, am doomed to dishonour and disgrace in my old age.

JULIANA.

Have you, then, suffered any serious loss?

FREYMANN.

Yes, I received this morning information of the failure of the house of Van der Werft in Amsterdam, in whose hands I had placed a considerable sum; but from this blow I might have recovered—it is not this which brings me to ruin.

JULIANA.

What, then, my dear father?

FREYMANN.

It is the report—I know not by what inconceivable means spread through the whole town—that I am threatened with bankruptcy—that my credit is gone, and all who have funds in my hands are drawing them at once, and without notice.

JULIANA.

Ah, what a dreadful thought comes across me!

FREYMANN.

Wiesel, it seems, was the first to give the alarm, and I immediately received letters from the Landrath Sturm, and the Baroness von Barnow, requiring their money. The Baroness writes in plain words that she can no longer entrust me with her property, having heard from Wiesel of the failure of a great house with which I am connected, and which Wiesel declares he had from your lips, Juliana.

JULIANA.

O heaven! O wretch that I am!

FREYMANN.

Nay, my child, do not tremble—do not be alarmed—I know it is impossible—I know you could not even have heard of this embarrassment.

JULIANA.

And yet—O my father!—spurn me from you—it is I—it is I who have brought you to ruin!

FREYMANN.

Girl!—you know not what you are saying: don't drive me distracted.

JULIANA (*starting up*).

Did you not say it was Wiesel who—O where were my senses?—did I not meet him just at the door when Meerfeld left me?—he, with his vile intrusive curiosity, must have overheard all!

FREYMANN.

Overheard!—whom, and what, in heaven's name?

JULIANA (*wringing her hands*).

O ask not! ask not! My poor father!—ruined, undone in his old age—branded with dishonour—and through me—through me, (*runs to the door*)—here Johann—Johann!

FREYMANN.

What are you about?

Enter JOHANN.

JOHANN.

Mamsell?

JULIANA.

Go instantly to Herr Meerfeld—tell him I request he will come down here immediately—this very moment.

JOHANN.

Herr Meerfeld is not in the house—he went out about half an hour ago, and has since sent for his portmanteau.

JULIANA.

So! and where has he ordered it to be sent to?

JOHANN.

His servant told me he had ordered it to be packed on his carriage; post-horses are ordered at the Golden Lion at eleven exactly, for his

master is obliged to return to Hamburg in all haste.

JULIANA (*commanding herself*).

Of course we know all about it—(*suddenly changing her tone*)—O no, no, no! I will never lie again—we know nothing—go—you may go! (*Johann goes out*). Meerfeld going, and with this unworthy opinion of my father!—I will not endure it: I must speak to him, or die. Willmar, if ever my father deserved your gratitude, fly to the inn, and bring Meerfeld to me this instant.

WILLMAR.

What can you have to say to a man who has forsaken you, only because fortune has forsaken you? Let him go; your father shall not suffer. I have now an income; what is mine is his: and at my leisure hours I can earn something by copying. My benefactor shall never know the want of any comfort during his life; and Frederica—she too will work hard. We will defer our marriage till——

FREYMANN.

Francis, you are a fine fellow; if I could ever accept assistance from any man's hand, I would from yours; but I shall not need it—my plans are already settled. I shall give up all I possess to my creditors, and try to get a place as steward

on some estate; which, with such an extensive connexion, can hardly fail me.

JULIANA (*struggling to speak*).

I am content with all—I *must* be—but I *will* see Meerfeld.

FREYMANN.

Not for the universe. I will not have you exchange one word with that man, or we shall fall out, Juliana, for the first time in our lives.

JULIANA.

You do not think I would ask him to assist you! I am not yet fallen so low as that. But this stranger shall not carry this degrading opinion of us back to his own home, nor be allowed to trample on my father's honour. Willmar, (*lowering her voice,*) you loved me once—bring me Meerfeld, or see me despair!

WILLMAR.

I *will* bring him. Whatever may be your reasons for wishing to speak to him, unworthy of your father you cannot be.

[*He goes out.*

FREYMANN (*following*).

Francis, stay—I command you.

JULIANA (*throwing herself at his feet*).

O my father! let him go; and you—hear the confession of all my guilt!

FREYMANN.

Don't distract me, child! *

JULIANA.

'Twas I told Meerfeld that you were on the eve of bankruptcy; and Wiesel must have overheard us.

FREYMANN.

Nonsense! how could you tell him what you did not know?

JULIANA.

I thought to lie, and knew not I spoke truth. I wished to try Meerfeld's love—O no, no! 'twas not that—I wished to get rid of him, because I loved Willmar.

FREYMANN.

Willmar! and you could thus fool your old father! And he—and I—what a cursed history! But, you foolish girl, if you loved Willmar, why did you not tell me so a month ago? I would have given you to him with all my heart.

JULIANA.

O, I see it now!—a fatal propensity for intrigue has led me into all this error. Love itself was only attractive under a veil of mystery; and thus have I lost the man of my choice, and re-

* Mache mir den Kopf nicht warm, "don't make my head hot."

duced the best of fathers to beggary and disgrace!

FREYMANN.

Juliana—I must needs say it—you have acted foolishly—and—and even wickedly.

JULIANA.

O never, never will I forgive myself!

FREYMANN.

Say no more—no more, child. Something must be done instantly, that Meerfeld may not regard me, for the rest of his life, as a mean, dishonourable liar.

Enter WIESEL (*bowing at every step*).

WIESEL.

Your most obedient, humble servant.

FREYMANN (*in a rage*).

There! We did not speak loud enough to be heard outside the door, Herr Wiesel; and that, I presume, is the reason you venture in.

WIESEL.

Beg pardon; I really don't comprehend.

JULIANA (*scornfully*).

Not for want of ears then.

WIESEL.

(*Aside.*) It's a proof there's no want of money when people are so uncivil! (*Aloud.*) My very

dear sir, my most particular friend, I should be sorry if my visit were troublesome—

FREYMANN.

It is so then.

WIESEL.

Indeed! and I'm come to reproach you too, my good friend.

FREYMANN.

Reproach!—me!

WIESEL.

Why, man,* what could you think of me? Did you really doubt my confidence in your honour, and the stability of your house? Why, if I had millions, I would willingly place them in your hands!—ay, millions—and sleep as sound as if they were under my own lock and key. (*Turning to Juliana.*) Only conceive, because I said something this morning about a bit of an estate that had taken my fancy, and because I happened to say, not referring to myself in the least, that in these times it wouldn't be unadvisable to make such a purchase, my old gentleman here takes offence,† and sends me back half an hour after, in bills and good notes, my poor twenty thousand dollars. Now, I only ask

* Männchen! männchen!

† Literally, "The old gentleman gets mustard in his nose."

you, Mamsell Juliana, if that's the way to treat an old friend of the family?

FREYMANN.

Sir, have you lost your senses, or I mine?

JULIANA.

Do you mean to say that my father has paid you?

WIESEL.

Your excellent and worthy bridegroom, Herr Meerfeld, brought me the sum in your father's name.

FREYMANN.

Meerfeld!

WIESEL (*taking bank notes out of a pocket-book*).

Yes, by your own wish; but I have brought my poor little property back to thrive under your good care and management.

FREYMANN (*putting them aside*).

What does all this mean?

WIESEL.

I hope my most excellent friend Herr Freymann will not make me miserable for the sake of a pitiful misunderstanding? Where in the world shall I find so safe a house, and five per cent. interest besides?

FREYMANN (*to Juliana*).

This would puzzle the devil himself.

JULIANA.

O, I begin to understand it all!

WIESEL.

You are angry, my worthy friend! O pray don't be angry! You see this has been a day of confusion, and every man mistook his neighbour. And,—he, he, he!—it was just as if all your acquaintance had combined to put the stability of your house to the proof. For example, I am just come from the Landrath Sturm, who begs his respects to you, and earnestly requests you will not take any further notice of a certain letter he says he sent you this morning.

FREYMANN.

I must confess it surprised me not a little.

WIESEL.

O you know the Landrath—he's old and nervous—listens to anything people say; but I brought him to reason. Says I, "Herr Landrath, where upon earth could you place your money more safely than in the hands of our friend Freymann?—a man," said I, "who was able to lay down the Baroness Barnow's thirty thousand dollars at a moment's warning?"

FREYMANN.

So the baroness has had her money, has she?

WIESEL.

Your worthy son-in-law knows how to do business, and doesn't let the grass grow under his feet; and his promptitude has had an effect—such an effect, my dear sir, as you can hardly conceive. Why, the worthy Fraülein von Warneck was within a hair's breadth of placing her property in government securities; but, Lord bless you! she changed her mind in a twinkling, when she saw that Freymann's bank was as sure as the exchequer, and that it would be folly indeed to take three per cent. interest when she could get four.

FREYMANN.

I hope no capitalists will ever repent trusting me with their property; but, for the present, good morning, Herr Wiesel, for I have business.

WIESEL.

May I take the liberty just to leave my few dollars with you?

FREYMANN.

As you please—only go—pray.

WIESEL.

Will you not count the money?

FREYMANN.

I will lock it up in your presence;—(*he throws it into a drawer of his bureau, and gives the key to*

Wiesel;) here, take the key with you, and call on me this evening or to-morrow.

WIESEL.

Without fail; and in the mean time I have the honour to take my most respectful leave.

[*He goes out bowing.*

FREYMANN, JULIANA.

FREYMANN.

'Tis well he's gone; I was very near betraying myself to this idle fool. Did you understand one word of it all?

JULIANA.

O yes—I see it all plainly. Meerfeld!—yes, 'tis like him—excellent, honourable man! Meerfeld it is who has saved us!

FREYMANN.

Meerfeld who has abandoned us! who was hurrying back to Hamburg!

JULIANA.

O you do not know him—do not yet understand this singular being!—but I do. An explanation with him is more necessary than ever; he shall take back his benefits, or think of us as we deserve. Ha! they come!

Enter WILLMAR *with* MEERFELD.

WILLMAR.

Here he is!—I have redeemed my word.

MEERFELD.

Not without some difficulty, you will allow. It was my wish never to have entered these doors again; and only the express command of Juliana, communicated by Herr Willmar, could have induced me to alter my resolution.

FREYMANN.

You have paid my debts, man—have saved me from destruction, and would avoid me now as if I were the most worthless of men! Do you not know that we have no right to treat with scorn those whom we have loaded with benefits?

MEERFELD.

I would have avoided you, because the man who has treated me unfairly could never be my father-in-law; and I paid your engagements, that you might not suppose it was the mere loss of your property which had induced me to change my mind.

JULIANA.

Take back your favours, Herr Meerfeld, but respect my father! I alone am guilty.

MEERFELD.

You, Juliana!—you, who so honourably disclosed to me the real circumstances of your family?—you, for whose sake——

JULIANA.

Meerfeld, I resign all claim to your regard—

in truth no slight sacrifice in expiation of my fault. Know, that everything I told you this morning was mere invention, which a few hours later became, from unforeseen accidents, a melancholy truth.

FREYMANN.

Here is the fatal letter from Amsterdam—read it—observe the date: you will see I could not, by any possibility, have received it before this morning.

MEERFELD, (*holds the letter without reading it*).

You were my father's friend—I will trust your word; but—but what am I to think of *you*, Juliana?

JULIANA.

Even what you will. I will endure your contempt, now that my father is fully justified.

MEERFELD.

But contempt is just what I cannot feel towards you—for you please me. Shall I tell you? —be still now, and let me speak. You are young—young people have strange notions sometimes! and you are beautiful—and pretty women, we all know, have occasional caprices: you wanted to try me perhaps—you wanted to turn me off—who can tell what fancies may pass through the mind of a girl of eighteen! Let us forget the past, and do better for the future.

JULIANA.

So considerate towards me—and but a moment before so severe against my father!

MEERFELD.

Yes—for, look you—I was not in love with your father, and I *am* in love with you, as I begin to find out. Whether it be reasonable or unreasonable, I know not: it is so, and there is no help for it.

JULIANA.

O Meerfeld!

[*She turns away, and hides her face.*

MEERFELD (*gazes at her for a moment in silence*).

No, unreasonable it is not, for you have too good an understanding not to take warning from the past: and so, in your father's presence, I offer you my heart and my hand.

JULIANA.

Such an offer—at such a moment——

MEERFELD.

There could not be a better moment, methinks: give but your hand in token of consent, Juliana! Your father must then accept from his son-in-law what he disdains to receive from a stranger. So trust your future to me—you shall not repent it.

JULIANA.

Noble, excellent man!—here is my hand, (*with*

a glance at Willmar). I feel that in a husband I should require a guide—one too firm in character to be the sport of my caprices—one capable of inspiring at once both awe and love. I honour you, Meerfeld! and my admiration for you must e'er long lead to love. Be the saviour of my father!—be my friend—my instructor!

Enter FREDERICA.

FREDERICA.

Herr Meerfeld's servant has begged me to inform his master that the post-horses are waiting.

MEERFELD.

They may go back to the stable, my dear young lady; I remain here—the happiest of bridegrooms! (*He kisses Juliana's hand.*)

FREDERICA.

May I wish you joy, Juliana?

JULIANA (*embracing her*).

Frederica! I have done you much wrong—much that you know, and much more you do not know. Forgive me, Frederica! Here stands the man who will make you amends for all my injustice and unkindness—(*pointing to Willmar*).

WILLMAR.

Whose whole life shall be devoted to making you as happy as you deserve.

FREYMANN.

Well, then, after so many troubles and perplexities, all is as it should be. Victoria! and long life to reason, which has redeemed the follies of love! To-morrow we will have the betrothing, in a week the wedding, and in half a year, Herr Meerfeld, I will come to Hamburg and settle accounts with you. A-propos—Juliana, have you tried on any of the dresses? Why, bless my heart, all the people I had collected together are, I dare say, running different ways by this time. Excuse me if I leave you—I must go: I shall have time enough to give you all my blessing afterwards. [*Exit.*

FREDERICA (*to Juliana*).

May you be but as happy as I am!

WILLMAR (*kissing Juliana's hand*).

Continue in the path you have had the courage to take, and you will command the respect of every honourable mind.

[*He goes out with Frederica.*

JULIANA (*to Meerfeld, after a pause*).

You have spared me a terrible confession, Meerfeld; but at some future day you shall hear what, for the present, I willingly conceal: when my conduct has won your entire respect and confidence, then you shall know all; and I trust you will never repent the goodness which has

raised me from humiliation and despair to a capability of better things. You love truth, Meerfeld—let truth be the pledge of our union! O I have learned to-day that falsehood weaves the net in which the deceiver is sooner or later entangled, while truth stands fast amid all the storms of life!

THE END.

THE UNCLE.

(Der Oheim.)

A PLAY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

REMARKS.

THE Play of the UNCLE was performed for the first time at Berlin, in the autumn of 1835; where Emile Devrient, one of the greatest actors, not only of Germany, but of all Europe, played Dr. Löwe.* It was immediately afterwards produced at the Court theatre at Weimar; where Durand, an excellent actor, and a very amiable and accomplished man, performed the principal character with almost equal effect. The success of the comedy was complete in both capitals, and it has since appeared on every stage in Germany, and everywhere with applause. Of all the Princess Amelia's dramas the UNCLE has been perhaps the most frequently played, and has given the most general and unmingled pleasure: the causes of its success lie deep in the peculiar habits and sympathies of the German character; it is, in fact, the most essentially *German* of all these comedies, the one least likely to be understood in England. Some of those scenes which I remember to have been most effective on the stage, would not be comprehended by any English audience, would appear perhaps flat in effect and puerile in sentiment—perhaps provoke a smile, where feelings of a very opposite nature would be excited in Germany. We are in England almost as much the slaves of certain arbitrary associations

* Pronounced *Leuvé*.

as the French themselves, while the Germans are less subjected to the influence of conventional ridicule than any people among whom I have lived. To make an old bachelor, a physician, a recluse philosopher, who feeds birds and dries butterflies, the serious hero and lover of the drama, is an idea which certainly would not have entered into the mind of any common playwright. Yet this original conception has been here most happily executed, without the slightest violation of nature or probability, as far as German manners and feelings are concerned. Dr. Löwe, with his personal negligence and his mental refinement, his child-like simplicity and moral grandeur, in the beautiful blending of homeliness, sentiment, humour, and pathos, is one of the happiest and most perfect delineations I have met with in the German modern drama. The fervent approval, the tearful sympathy, it never fails to excite, particularly among the young, and the high rank it has taken in the popular estimation, strike me as a very pleasing characteristic of the German public.

Anna, the young English heiress, has some *traits* which remind us of Miss Edgeworth's admirable character of Miss Broadhurst in the "Absentee"—with beauty and the softer graces of her sex superadded. Her self-dependence, her decision of purpose, her generous yet mistaken motives for marrying Julius, without being absolutely in love with him, and the going over of her heart to the Doctor, appear to me beautifully managed. Julius is just one of those whiskered, well-dressed, well-meaning, weak young men, so commonly to be met with, who are inclined to do right when they are not tempted to do wrong; and Anna is precisely the woman to be disgusted by the want of strength of mind and truth in her lover, the moment she has a perception of his real character. The part of Anna requires to be played with exquisite delicacy and grace, lest it verge, though ever so little, on prudery and harshness. It is most charmingly performed by Mademoiselle Bauer of Dresden, and Mademoiselle Lortzing of Weimar.

Madame Stürmer, the *malade imaginaire*, is a part which reads

ill, I am afraid,—at least in English; but it acts well, and produces much comic effect.

In the second scene of the first act of this play, (page 149,) an allusion occurs which seems to require a more detailed and satisfactory explanation than can well be given in a marginal note. Madame Stürmer, lamenting her deceased husband, exclaims rather in the style of an Irish widow at her husband's wake—"Ach warum musste er sterben!" literally, *Ah why must he have died?*"—to which the satirical waiting-maid replies, *sotto voce*, "Um sich Ehen scheidungs prozess zu ersparen!" to spare himself the trial for a divorce; a phrase which might easily, according to our English ideas on the subject, expose the lady to most undeserved imputations. The English law admits but one plea for divorce,—the infidelity of the wife. But in Saxony the legal pleas for divorce are several; viz. 1. The proved infidelity of *either* party; the wife, as in Scotland, being able on this plea to divorce her husband. 2. Bigamy on either side. 3. Desertion of home (bed and board) by either party. 4. Quasi-desertion; that is, as I understand it, when the husband and wife have agreed to be separated for life without other cause than mutual aversion, disparity of temper or character, &c.; and coercive measures have been tried, or apparently tried, without result. 5. An attempt made by either party on the life of the other. Lastly, any disgraceful crime subjecting one party to an imprisonment of not less than four years' duration, affords a legal plea for divorce to the other.

In cases of divorce on the plea of the husband's infidelity, he forfeits all claim whatever on the property of his wife. The care of the children is adjudged to the party who, upon evidence produced, appears most likely to give them a good education:—when very young, invariably to the mother, except where the guilt of infidelity rests with her. In no case can either parent be denied all access to the children, unless it be proved before a tribunal that the habitual course of life is so perverse as to endanger the moral well-being of the offspring: in that case, an order of prohibition is issued. The expense of the maintenance and education of the

children rests with the father; but should the mother be rich and the father poor, she also must contribute to their support, in proportion to her wealth.

Some years ago, before the late revolution in the Saxon government, divorce was more difficult than at present; while in Prussia it was less so. The law is at present almost on an equal footing in both countries, perhaps stricter in Prussia, where it has lately been altered, public morals having suffered greatly in consequence of the facility of divorce. Again, in Saxony, it was from consideration for the morals of the community that the law was relaxed: all which is worthy of reflection and investigation on deeper and higher grounds than mere superficial morality and expediency.

The expense of procuring a legal decree for divorce may be from twelve dollars (two pounds sterling) and upwards to a very large sum, according to the circumstances of the case.

The action of this drama we may suppose to take place at one of the small capitals* in the north of Germany, as Weimar, Cobourg, Stettin, Dessau, &c., where a young lady, rich, noble, and beautiful, might put on her bonnet and walk through the streets unattended, with perfect propriety.

* In German "*Residenzen*," as being the *residence* of the sovereign prince.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

JULIUS, BARON LÖWENBERG.	
DOCTOR LÖWE,	*His uncle.*
MADAME VON STÜRMER.	
ANNA,	*Her step-daughter.*
BARON RIEDLER.	
CATHARINE,	*A poor widow.*
MARTIN,	*The Doctor's servant.*
HENRIETTE,	*Madame Stürmer's maid.*
CHRISTIAN,	*Her footman.*
A NOTARY.	

THE UNCLE.

ACT I.

Scene the First.

A Street.

Enter Riedler *on one side, and* Henriette, *with a phial in her hand, on the other.*

RIEDLER.

Ha, Mamsell Henriette! whither away so fast?

HENRIETTE.

Whither—can you ask, sir? as if there was any way for me but from the house-door to the apothecary's shop!

RIEDLER.

Is your good lady fallen sick again, by way of a change?

HENRIETTE.

Oh, yesterday evening we had a terrible scene! She had an inflammation of the lungs, it seems; and because Dr. Richter wouldn't believe it, and refused to bleed her, she became downright mad, wished the doctor at the mischief, and herself in heaven; and, in short, went so far in the height of her fury, that the doctor ran off without his hat, and swore he would never enter the house again—a catastrophe which of a sudden changed my lady's inflammation into a bilious fever.

RIEDLER.

Bravo! admirable!—and how well you tell the story!

HENRIETTE.

Yes—I'm used to it—had always a knack at telling a story; and if I had not the comfort of relating the scenes that happen at home to half a dozen of my intimate acquaintance, I'm sure I don't think I could stay another hour in such a detested service.

RIEDLER.

And what said Miss Anna to all this ado?

HENRIETTE.

Why, Miss Anna had to play the harp to her

mamma from midnight till after one this morning, to quiet her nerves forsooth!

RIEDLER.

A very pleasant task!

HENRIETTE.

O that's nothing!—formerly, I remember that she had to play all night long; and all the physic that my lady takes, she must taste it first; and not long ago, when my lady had the toothache, they talked of pulling out one of Miss Anna's beautiful teeth, just that she might tell her mamma if it was really so very painful or not—ha, ha, ha!

RIEDLER (*laughing*).

That's awful.

HENRIETTE.

Ay, in truth; but so it always is, when one spoils people in that way. My young lady would bear it all, if it were ten times worse. Now, suppose a rich uncle had adopted me, and left me his sole heiress;—"My lady mamma," says I, "for your daughter I'm not good enough, it seems, and for your waiting-maid too good; you have your jointure, I have my dowry—the world is wide—your most obedient!" (*with a mock curtsey*).

RIEDLER.

Pity that Miss Anna has not so much sense as Mamsell Henriette!

HENRIETTE.

Sense! Lord knows you rich people have seldom much to boast of, and she hasn't a grain; for she can never conceive that with her foolish forbearance she causes us poor servants double trouble; and, in spite of all the pains I have taken, I have never been able to bring her to abuse the old lady yet.

RIEDLER.

That is really too bad.

HENRIETTE.

But, for all that, I want her to keep me in her service when she marries.

RIEDLER.

Is it possible she could think of discharging such a superlative attendant as Mamsell Henriette?—O no!

HENRIETTE.

This match with Baron Löwenberg will certainly take place, will it not?

RIEDLER.

I hope so.

HENRIETTE.

He is waiting for his mother's consent: but it cannot be refused—that is certain, isn't it?

RIEDLER.

Assuredly; and I even hope that to-day's

post will bring it—that is, supposing the mother to be a reasonable woman.

HENRIETTE.

Where does she live?

RIEDLER.

In Switzerland.

HENRIETTE.

In Switzerland! Oh I hope we shall go there after the wedding to pay her a visit. I once saw the Swiss Family at the play—(*sings*)—

"Who ever heard me complain?"

perhaps I may find a Jacob for myself.*

RIEDLER.

Of course you will: but here comes the Baron, and your lady will be asking for her medicine.

HENRIETTE.

O! she'll take another in the meantime.

[*She goes out.*

* Wer hörte wohl jemals mich klagen, "who ever heard me complain?"—one of the songs in a beautiful and popular opera composed by Weigl, now the imperial Kapell-meister at Vienna. Die Schweitzer Familie was produced once, and but once, I believe, in England by Sontag, when she sang the part of Emmeline for her benefit: it is also a favourite part of Mad. Schroeder-Devrient, and the one, I believe, in which she first appeared as a singer.

Enter JULIUS.

RIEDLER.

If there were such servants in every house, the secret police might save a good round sum.* Good morning, Löwenberg: how is it with you?

JULIUS.

Ill—ill.

RIEDLER.

Ill! the post is not come in then?

JULIUS.

Yes, it's come; but I wish one of those Swiss avalanches had stopped the road up, on its way.

RIEDLER.

You alarm me—have you had a letter from your mother?

JULIUS.

Yes—that's the very thing.

RIEDLER.

Why, surely against a marriage with the daughter of Baron Stürmer and Lady Temple, the sole heiress of her uncle the rich Lord Temple, she can have nothing to object?

JULIUS.

No, not exactly that—but hear what she writes—

* *i. e.* Because it would not be necessary to have hired spies in almost every family, as is the case at Vienna and Munich; and also, though the system is there less flagrant, in some of the northern capitals.

(*he reads*)—"My dear Son," and so forth—"with regard to your project of marrying this rich young Englishwoman, I have nothing against it, for my own part; but as in an affair of such importance I do not trust your inexperience, and not knowing, besides, how far your engagement with the Lindners may have gone, your excellent uncle must be the sole judge in this case; what he thinks right will have my approval; and his consent shall immediately be followed by mine."—Now what do you say to that?

RIEDLER.

That women were sent into the world for nothing else but to pull down what men have toiled to build up.

JULIUS.

Before I get my uncle's consent to a marriage with Anna, the stream shall flow backwards to its fountain.

RIEDLER.

Why, it seems he has dried flowers and empaled butterflies with old Lindner, and the girl Caroline has read Matthison's poems to him—and therefore he has set his heart on the match——

JULIUS.

And accordingly will never give his consent to any other.

RIEDLER.

You are too easily discouraged. Your uncle is an oddity—hard as a rock one day, and the next so soft, you may twine him round your finger.

JULIUS.

There you mistake him: he is not hard or soft, according to the day—but according to the matter in hand.

RIEDLER.

But it would be really a cursed bore if he were to ruin this marriage affair: what, after all, does he mean you to do in the world?

JULIUS.

He means the best, I believe—that I should become an active, useful member of society; that's what he means.

RIEDLER.

Active—useful—every journeyman labourer is that.

JULIUS.

And he esteems such labourers, Riedler. Don't take it ill—but really there are moments when I repent that I did not follow his advice from the beginning; I believe I had been better off for it. Now, indeed, all return is cut off—it is now too late.

RIEDLER.

Tell me what is it that disturbs you thus?

JULIUS.

Anna speaks just as my uncle does.

RIEDLER.

She's a prude and a pedant: if she hadn't so much money, I would really advise you to give her up.

JULIUS.

It is—I must needs say it—unpardonable, the way in which I have lately neglected my studies!—if I go on in this manner, I shall certainly forget everything I know.

RIEDLER.

Pooh!

JULIUS.

And besides, I have got horribly into debt.

RIEDLER.

A splendid appointment will make all right, and that you will have through the connexion I have obtained for you; and you shall not lose Anna's hand either. I will not lay my head to rest till I have gained it for you: and——(*putting his hand to his forehead*)—I have just thought of a stroke of Genius! Anna is yours! and in a month from this we shall see your creditors scampering out of the way of your equipage.

JULIUS.

But hear me, Riedler—you don't mean to try your eloquence on my uncle? That were pains thrown away, and would probably only make the mischief worse.

RIEDLER.

Do you think me mad? Not a syllable shall he hear from me; he shall not even suspect that I have any hand in it, and yet I will weave such a net around him, that I will put it out of his power to refuse his consent—

JULIUS.

I do not comprehend—

RIEDLER.

Your uncle knows nothing of this new flame of yours?

JULIUS.

Assuredly not: I have never spoken of her, and he never listens to mere gossip.

RIEDLER.

Well, your uncle, in spite of this fancy of setting up for an old man at eight-and-thirty, is not absolutely insensible. Anna is beautiful, and somewhat tedious with her learning and her virtue—just the sort of thing to charm him—if he could see her without prejudice, and not as the beloved of his nephew; and that is just what we have to bring about.

JULIUS.

But even then we are still far from our object.

RIEDLER.

Not so far as you think.—Eh! if your uncle now, for example, should fall in love with her?—could he blame in his nephew an inclination in which he had got entangled himself?

JULIUS.

You know nothing about it. My uncle in love! I believe that for the last eighteen years, nothing of the feminine gender has interested him, except the wide-mouthed statue of Hope on the monument of his Marie.

RIEDLER.

That were precisely the jest—to make him faithless to his buried love, and so oblige him to forgive your infidelity to Caroline.

JULIUS.

I hope you do not mean to make my uncle ridiculous with this contrivance? I should not like that—nor would I suffer it.

RIEDLER.

Is love ridiculous?

JULIUS.

And besides, Anna will never consent to play a part in such a farce.

RIEDLER.

I do not intend to let her into our plan at all—

she does not know, does she, that Doctor Löwe is your uncle?

JULIUS (*confused*).

Why, the conversation never took that turn—never gave me an opportunity——

RIEDLER.

And then I had forbidden you to introduce yourself to these strangers at first as the son of a lately ennobled merchant.

JULIUS.

I cannot say it was *that* which prevented me——

RIEDLER.

Never mind what it was.—Well, I am going to Martini's to eat a hundred oysters—will you go?

JULIUS.

I have no time.

RIEDLER.

Ah, true—you must to your mistress; but let the heart be once satisfied, we shall have the appetite coming in for arrears. [*Exit.*

JULIUS.

Riedler is thoughtless, but he means well—and then he is not so *very* wrong in some respects: my uncle does not know what ambition is, and I should die a sort of moral death between him and Caroline.

[*Exit.*

Scene II.

An apartment in the house of Madame Stürmer.

Enter Madame Stürmer, *leaning on* Anna *and* Henriette.

MADAME STÜRMER.

A little farther—there—set me down: do you not see how weak I am on my feet?

HENRIETTE.

A fly in September is stronger than your ladyship, truly.

MADAME STÜRMER.

And yet I do believe that Doctor Richter could see me in this condition, and have the audacity to prescribe me a ride for exercise. A man without a conscience is that Doctor Richter! let him go, but when I am dying, Henriette—then do me the kindness to send for him, and bring him here,—that before I depart this life I may have the satisfaction of hearing him confess how ill I am! Anna! you do not speak a word?

ANNA.

Will you not sit down, dear mother?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Mother! how often must I tell you that now you have grown so tall, and are well-nigh twenty, I don't choose to be called mother any longer? You have accustomed yourself to the word till it slips out before people; and there are some absurd enough, or short-sighted enough, to take you really for my own daughter.

ANNA.

And even in such a case would you be ashamed of me?

MADAME STÜRMER.

A grown-up daughter of twenty is no credit to a mother who has kept her good looks as I have done; and I think I show quite sufficient self-denial in keeping you with me. I might have sent you, after your father's death, to some boarding-school; but it was against my feelings.

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

And my interest.

ANNA.

Well, madam, you may be easy: I shall not be a burthen to you much longer.

MADAME STÜRMER.

That is just the question—I don't know that. You are to marry this young Löwenberg; but

he, as Baron Reidler assures me, intends to use all his influence to induce me to live in his house.

ANNA.

And in so far he proves his respect for *me.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Certainly; but whether I shall yield to his request, depends entirely on your behaviour. I have been dreadfully neglected of late—dreadfully!

ANNA.

Will you not be pleased to sit down?

MADAME STÜRMER.

On the sofa. (*She sits.*) Yes, dreadfully neglected, as I was saying; but so it is always with a lonely widow. Ah, if your poor dear father could but see it all!

ANNA (*aside*).

And if he could, I trust he would be satisfied with his daughter.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Alas! why did he die?

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

To spare himself the trouble of a divorce, I fancy.

MADAME STÜRMER (*yawning*).

This young Löwenberg is a good sort of young man; I hope you will be happy with him.

ANNA.

I hope so too: for the motives of my attachment to him are sufficiently disinterested and honourable to lead to happiness. They are, compassion for an excellent but misguided young man; the wish to save him from that abyss, to the very brink of which his false friends have allured him; to be able to say in my heart, that the man of my choice owes all to me—all—that I have restored him to virtue, duty, and useful energy.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Every husband, Anna, is as a bit of rough clay, which it is the wife's part to model into something graceful and ornamental. But you wil have little trouble with yours; for I shall undertake to form him myself when I go to live with you. (*She yawns.*) Is Christian gone to Doctor Wilde?

HENRIETTE.

Yes, my lady, but he did not find him at home.

MADAME STÜRMER.

There!—such things happen to none but me. I did wish so urgently to see him at this very moment, for I feel that sleep coming over me—that waking sleep, you know———

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

Which lasts usually for six or seven hours together.

ANNA.

After a sleepless night, it is no wonder if you feel tired; lie down on the sofa, and we will leave you alone.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Alone, indeed! that I may sleep never to wake again? for what I feel, you may believe it or not, isn't weariness at all, but a horrid sort of stupor; when I close my eyes, such strange figures float before me!

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

A stranger figure before mine, when they are wide open.

MADAME STÜRMER (*lies down*).

Anna, sit by me; the cushion is too low; lay your arm under my head—so, so: and you, Henriette, go away; you have the bad habit of sighing every now and then, and that disturbs my rest.

HENRIETTE.

As your ladyship pleases. (*Aside.*) I shall know how to turn my sighs to good account for the future. [*Exit.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Anna! what was I going to say? O yes!

when I go to live with you and your husband, my sleeping-room must look into the court-yard, and my sitting-room into the street. My maid's room must be next to my bed-room. I should like an ante-room also, if it could be managed—and a dressing-room—and a closet besides, where the dog might sleep;—and—and—Anna!—my thoughts wander—I think I must be delirious.

ANNA.

Only sleepy, dear madam.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Do you know that—lately—when we were at Domfeld's—I felt—Doctor Wilde must—(*her voice sinks in unintelligible murmurs, and at length she falls fast asleep.*)

ANNA.

She was my dear father's beloved wife: I will do my duty towards her as long as it rests with me.

Enter JULIUS.

JULIUS.

Not a living soul in the ante-room—so you must pardon me.

ANNA.

Hush! hush! she sleeps. Come nearer, Julius, and sit down; I have been wishing for some time to speak to you alone.

JULIUS (*brings a chair, and seats himself near her*).

I will vow a temple to Morpheus for this favour.

ANNA.

Do not be in a hurry with such vows: who knows whether you will consider yourself so much bound to him, when I tell you that the subject of our conference will not be love, but something much more serious?

JULIUS.

Would you waste thus the few moments which fate allows us?

ANNA.

No—rather employ them wisely. But before I go on, Julius, have you any answer from your mother yet?

JULIUS (*confused*).

Not yet.

ANNA.

No matter; I flatter myself that I shall obtain her approbation: I have my mother's consent, and our union must take place shortly; a circumstance which obliges me to say, now and quickly, what is more fitly heard from the lips of the mistress than the wife. Julius, if you really do wish to make me happy, your mode of life must be in some things changed.

JULIUS.

How so?

ANNA.

You must, in the first place, employ yourself steadily: I know nothing more worthless than an idle man.

JULIUS.

I have finished my studies, and the place I hope to obtain——

ANNA.

Can only be deservedly obtained through hard work; and, undeserved, I could scarcely wish you to obtain it. Secondly, there are some friends from whom I wish you to break off, for never could I count them among mine.

JULIUS.

Is not Riedler——

ANNA.

He is a parasite, a flatterer, whom I endure for my mother's sake alone: and I presume it will not be difficult for you to find other society; for many of your expressions, your whole demeanour towards this man, prove to me that you have older, better friends, whom for him, and such as him, you have lately neglected. Julius, who was it who superintended your education?

JULIUS.

My uncle!

ANNA.

Have you had the misfortune to lose him?

JULIUS.

O no, he is still living; but he is——

ANNA.

He lives—and you have never yet mentioned him to me?

JULIUS (*greatly embarrassed*).

He is—how shall I express it?—a man of the last century—old-fashioned—but upright, that I must allow.

ANNA.

I should wish to make his acquaintance; does he reside in this town?

JULIUS.

No—that is—yes—but he receives no visiters whatever.

ANNA.

He will not surely refuse the bride of his nephew; when will you see him?

JULIUS.

I was thinking to-day—perhaps——

ANNA.

Very good—you will prepare him, then, to receive me.

Enter RIEDLER.

RIEDLER (*opening the door*).

May I come in?

ANNA.

Hush!

RIEDLER (*advancing*).

What do I see? our lady mother asleep, and Miss Anna's arm doing duty as a pillow? Never mind, I will release you from the task. (*Aside to Julius.*) But first, you must be off, for you are in my way here. I was just going to commence operations.

JULIUS (*aside*).

I fear some indiscretion.

RIEDLER (*aside*).

Fear nothing—nothing that can annoy or compromise you; you are out of the affair completely. But go—off with you. [*Julius takes his hat.*

ANNA.

Julius, where are you going?

JULIUS.

I told you of my intention to visit my uncle.

ANNA.

Then I will not detain you.

JULIUS (*aside to Riedler*).

I go—but remember, no imprudence.

[*He kisses Anna's hand, and goes out.*

RIEDLER (*looking after him*).

At last!

[*He follows him to the door, and shuts it after him with violence.*

ANNA.

How could you do such a thing?

MADAME STÜRMER (*waking with a loud shriek*).

Ah, an earthquake!

RIEDLER.

I am in despair to have broken your ladyship's repose; but at Martini's, where I went just now to eat a few oysters, I heard of your being alarmingly ill. I left my breakfast in the midst, hurried hither, and a sudden draught must have forced the door from my trembling hands.

MADAME STÜRMER.

You have so terrified me—I shall never recover it.

RIEDLER.

You look dreadfully ill.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Don't I? There, you hear that, Anna! You are the only one, Baron, who will believe me.

RIEDLER.

You have really *too* much fortitude—*too* much command over yourself: you never complain till your soul is just hovering on your lips; but, my

dear madam, if you do not take more care of yourself, the consequences will be terrible!

MADAME STÜRMER (*alarmed*).

You think so, really?

RIEDLER.

I hear you have parted with Doctor Richter?

MADAME STÜRMER.

The scene had nearly cost me my life. Anna, tell him all about it.

RIEDLER.

I know it already, and have only to congratulate you on the chance which has delivered you from the hands of an ignoramus. Didn't this Doctor Richter presume at times to hint at your age? as if your age could have the least influence on your health! You are yet in the prime of life, my dear madam; it is vexation and grief which have broken down your strength.

MADAME STÜRMER (*sighs*).

Vexation and grief—there, indeed, you are right.

RIEDLER.

Dr. Richter never understood your disorder—have nothing more to say to him; and yet, in your precarious state, you cannot remain without a physician.

MADAME STÜRMER.

I have sent for Doctor Wilde.

RIEDLER.

That will not do either,—he inclines, I hear, to the homœopathic system; no, my dear madam, if I may be permitted to advise, call in Doctor Löwe, and no other.

MADAME STÜRMER.

I have heard of Doctor Löwe—have not you, Anna?

ANNA.

I have heard him spoken of as the first physician in the place.

RIEDLER.

He is the man for you! Give his prescriptions but one trial—in a month you will be as strong and hearty as you were at four-and-twenty.

MADAME STÜRMER.

I know that this Dr. Löwe has completely set up the wife of General Seeberg, who is five years older than I am.

RIEDLER.

It appears to me that your speech to-day is somewhat impaired.

MADAME STÜRMER.

You think so?

RIEDLER.

That your breathing is somewhat short: you will admit *that?*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Alas! I have been accustomed lately almost to live without breathing.

RIEDLER.

It would be a pity if you were prevented from going to the party to-morrow.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Alas! I am accustomed to sacrifices of every kind; but medical aid I *must* have; Anna, if ever I deserved your gratitude, bring me Dr. Löwe!

RIEDLER.

With your permission, I will send Christian for him.

MADAME STÜRMER (*bitterly*).

That Christian has the misfortune never to find people at home: he is a fool—just such a one as would tell the doctor that his lady was slightly indisposed, and beg he would come at his leisure; but if it be too much trouble for the the young lady——

ANNA.

If you wish me to go to him myself——

MADAME STÜRMER.

No—not I. Send Christian: my life or death I well know to be indifferent.

ANNA.

Where shall I find this Doctor Löwe?

RIEDLER.

In Broad Street; but it is raining fast, I see.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Oh, don't be uneasy: I wouldn't for the world that the young lady should catch cold on my account: my poor life is worthless to every one: I really believe those around me will never be easy till I am dead in my coffin.

RIEDLER (*aside*).

Indeed I believe so too.

ANNA.

I am no spoiled child: I will take an umbrella.

RIEDLER.

Will you not allow me to go instead of the young lady?

MADAME STÜRMER.

You! poor dear man!—no, I will not suffer such a thing;—you, who had the rheumatism in your arm last winter! Do you hear, Anna—the kindness of Baron Riedler?

ANNA.

Pray be not uneasy: I shall not abuse his kindness. [*She hurries out.*

RIEDLER (*aside*).

Ay, let her go; the meeting will only be the more *piquant*; 'tis a capital joke!

MADAME STÜRMER (*calling after Anna*).

Anna!—don't forget to tell the doctor that I

have pains in my chest—violent pains and cramps, and that I am so weak I can scarcely stand on my feet, and with such a giddiness in my head that I cannot move across the room. Anna! (*jumping off the sofa*)—Anna!—do you hear, I say!

[*Runs out after Anna; Riedler follows her, laughing.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*A Room in the house of Doctor Löwe; books, papers, cases of dried insects, and other objects of natural history, lie scattered about on the tables.*

LÖWE.

These butterflys have been badly packed; the Menelaus has a wing torn, and the Ulysses has lost half a head. Have you got the ant-eggs for the birds?

MARTIN.

No; but I got some crumbs of bread and flies for them.

LÖWE.

I am not in spirits to-day, Martin.

MARTIN.

So I see, sir.

LÖWE.

I have just had a letter from my sister-in-law, which has vexed me.

MARTIN.

Indeed, sir?

LÖWE.

This boy—this Julius—you know how my heart clings to him: since the death of my Marie, I have loved nothing on earth so well, though, in good truth, I have but little comfort in him.

MARTIN.

Never mind him, sir: send him about his business.

LÖWE.

I can't—I can't do it; the young dissolve such ties lightly, for they can easily form new ones; but when we arrive at a certain age——

MARTIN.

Why, when we come to a certain age, I think as how it's time to think of ourselves first. What has the young gentleman been doing now?

LÖWE.

There is no occasion for you to know that.

MARTIN.

He seldom visits his uncle—*that* I know.

LÖWE.

Every Monday: and this is Monday.

MARTIN.

He never comes home at night—before morning.

LÖWE.

Because he's not sleepy, I suppose.

MARTIN.

Then he plays——

LÖWE.

So do I sometimes—chess.

MARTIN.

And he has debts.

LÖWE.

Hush! hush!—I know nothing of such things: I will hear nothing.

MARTIN.

Well, sir, you are right; it is rather dangerous for an uncle to ask after his nephew's debts; for there are discoveries to be made on such ground, for which one must pay dearly sometimes.

LÖWE (*walks up and down, then stops suddenly*).

Martin, how is the weather?

MARTIN.

Detestable, your honour.

LÖWE.

That is provoking: I must go again to that

child of poor Dame Starke which was seized with the cramp yesterday.

MARTIN.

Why, they live five stories high; such people get well of themselves.

LÖWE.

Those who live five stories high, Martin, are nearer to heaven than those on the first floor;* and then, besides, it is two days since I went to the churchyard.

MARTIN.

Mamsell Marie herself would not have gone out in such weather.

LÖWE.

In *any* weather she would have gone to visit my last resting-place.

MARTIN.

Let me order the carriage for your honour.

LÖWE.

No—no; the horses will get wet, and the coachman too.

MARTIN.

Troth, one would think your honour went out

* In Germany, as in France, many families inhabit the same houses, the upper stories being occupied by the poorer classes. Some of the houses are enormous: a friend of mine at Munich inhabited a suite of twenty-three rooms on one floor, all communicating with each other.

a riding, just for the diversion of the coachman and horses.

LÖWE.

Let me go on my own way—you have been used to it these twenty years; and hark ye, Martin, just attend to the weather, and tell me as soon as the rain is over.

MARTIN (*aside as he goes out*).

Now, there's all that learning's good for; it proves that it's better to be a doctor's coachman than the doctor himself. [*Exit.*

LÖWE (*after a pause*).

I believe I have taken the right method with Julius in leaving him free. Man acts best from his own free will, and virtue itself is burthensome when forced on us by authority. I depend on those principles which I instilled into him, and I have hopes he will come out of this giddy whirlpool of society—more experienced—and consequently more to be trusted; yet if he be so lost as to be capable of forgetting his first love, if he thus close against himself the entrance to that haven where he was to find shelter from the storms of life—why then—then——

Enter JULIUS.

JULIUS.

I hope I do not disturb my good uncle!

LÖWE (*kindly*).

I expected you—for this is Monday, you know. Come here, and tell me how you have spent the last week.

JULIUS.

Why, not well—or rather ill enough: I have been engaged on all sides: *here* I was obliged to pay a necessary visit; *there* I could not get off joining a party; I have really scarce had time to think these last few days.

LÖWE.

Then you have done no work?

JULIUS.

Yes, from time to time—but very little, I must confess: besides, it was quite as necessary to gain friends, whose interest would forward my views, as to work at my desk all day.

LÖWE.

You have studied for the law, and have brought a good certificate from the university. I wish you now to apply what you have learned to the benefit of your fellow-citizens.

JULIUS.

And I wish to be something more than merely useful.

LÖWE.

I thought, till now, that to benefit others was the highest aim of life.

JULIUS.

To go through the usual *carrière* in the usual way is not, in my opinion, worth all the trouble and labour it costs. Nor should I consider myself repaid by what people are pleased to call "earning one's bread."

LÖWE.

Not if you could enjoy it with the consciousness of duty fulfilled?—not if you could share it with Caroline?

JULIUS.

What do you mean, my dear uncle?

LÖWE.

I mean, if you were once provided for, nothing could stand in the way of your engagement with Caroline.

JULIUS.

Of course—certainly.

LÖWE.

Why do you change colour?

JULIUS.

My dear uncle—I should like to enter the diplomatic line.

LÖWE.

Well?

JULIUS.

'Tis better paid.

LÖWE.

That's true.

JULIUS.

Caroline's fortune will be nothing to signify.

LÖWE.

Her father is not poor—and I am always at hand.

JULIUS.

And besides, to speak openly, Caroline and I grew up as children together, and when we first knew each other, we were much alike; but since then I have altered in many things, and grown —I may say it—wiser; she, on the contrary, is just the same as ever, and I scarcely think we should suit each other now.

LÖWE (*startled*).

Soh!

JULIUS.

If I should withdraw from this engagement, no one can accuse me of unfairness: I never proposed in form, and her father refused to bind himself beforehand by any promise.

LÖWE.

And did you never declare your attachment to her—talk of love to her?

JULIUS.

Talk of love to her! O yes;—but—but—also, by your leave, to others besides her.

LÖWE.

It sounds much more serious on her part; she has refused several offers for your sake.

JULIUS.

So young ladies always say, but I have not heard of *one* yet.

LÖWE.

Hear me, Julius: you have formed some other attachment—or is it ambition only has urged you to seek the hand of another? Your mother has written to me—I am informed of all: a young English woman, is it not?—put her out of your head, Julius, at once.

JULIUS.

Perhaps you would not speak thus, if you were to give yourself the trouble to know the young lady alluded to. Yes, uncle, if you will know the truth—I love another; fate offers me rank and riches, with the hand of an excellent, a charming woman, and I am not philosopher enough, I confess, to reject such good fortune, merely because, in earlier times, I read Gellert's Fables with Caroline, and danced with her at a village ball.

LÖWE.

And what would poor Caroline say, if she heard you speak in this manner?

JULIUS.

She? ah, my good uncle, I have reason to suspect that she has been beforehand with me in inconstancy; she has not persuaded her father to come to town for the last two months.

LÖWE.

Because her father is laid up with the gout.

JULIUS.

She writes seldom, too, and then only short letters.

LÖWE.

Ay, because she doesn't choose to waste paper and ink on such a thankless fellow. (*Sharply*) How do you call this new flame of yours?

JULIUS (*hesitating*).

Temple—she is the adopted daughter and heiress of Lord Temple.

LÖWE.

Julius, can't you put the whole thing out of your head at once? I lay any wager you only *fancy* you love this girl—eh?

JULIUS.

You would lose your wager.

LÖWE.

It is not possible! it can't be possible! A man can love but once in his life—as no one knows better than myself; and that you loved Caroline, I am convinced.

JULIUS.

Good uncle, the constancy which you would prescribe to others belongs only to yourself.

LÖWE.

I don't know much of the world, nor the world's ways, 'tis true;—but I know the human heart as well as any one. Julius, follow my advice—try to persuade yourself that your love for this—this—how do you call her?—Temple is her name, isn't it?—is nothing but a fever-fit, so to speak—a fever-dream, and nothing else; and in a short time you will confess that it *is* nothing more.

JULIUS (*after a pause of thought*).

What reply will you make to my mother's letter?

LÖWE.

I think I would rather send no reply for the present; when you have recovered your senses I will answer her, and right joyfully. You are out of humour, Julius: 'tis but natural! the patient is always worse after the first specific—particularly when it operates strongly;—that as a physician I know full well, and so I think it were against all reason to talk with you longer on a subject on which you know my opinion. I leave you to your own reflections, and will go

and write my journal. Good-bye,—we part friends: you are not angry, Julius?

JULIUS.

Dear uncle! (*kisses his hand.*)

LÖWE.

I desire nothing but your good—nothing but your good, believe me! [*Exit.*

JULIUS.

He'll never consent! and will probably set my mother against it besides. 'Twas well that I did not name Anna von Stürmer—for Riedler's plan no longer appears so absurd, on reflection.

Enter ANNA *hastily—an umbrella in her hand, her dress and bonnet disordered by the rain.*

JULIUS.

Do not my eyes deceive me? can it be you?—Anna! how came you hither?

ANNA.

Julius! I thought you were gone to your uncle;—does not Doctor Löwe live here?

JULIUS.

Doctor Löwe? surely!—what can you want with him?

ANNA.

My mother wishes to consult him.

JULIUS.

And you have ventured out in this horrible weather?

ANNA (*half smiling*).

O I have had some rueful mischances by the way! they directed me wrong in the first place—to a Doctor Löwe who lives at the other end of the street, and who is a doctor of law, it seems: I really believe he thought I was come to make my will. But I hope I am right at last, and that this is the doctor of medicine?

JULIUS.

You are in his house.

ANNA.

I did not know he was an acquaintance of yours; you must introduce me; I am almost ashamed to appear before him; the rain and storm must have made me a pretty figure—and (*looking round*) not a looking-glass in the room.

JULIUS.

A proof that it is inhabited by a philosopher.

ANNA.

Birds—books—butterflies—what a confusion!

JULIUS.

A bachelor's lodging.

ANNA.

He is, however, a good man—is he not?

JULIUS.

An excellent man—but eccentric; you must not be repelled by his exterior, nor expect compliments from him.

ANNA (*looking at her dress*).

I certainly cannot expect to be complimented on my appearance, at least.

JULIUS.

Yet, if you would take the trouble to penetrate his character—I think you would find it not unsuited to your own.

ANNA.

His character? It can signify little to me. I ask nothing from him, but that he will speak a few tranquillising words to my poor mother. Where shall I find him? pray let me see him immediately.

JULIUS.

I cannot, I fear, have the honour of accompanying you further, for I have spoken to him already, and he will never suffer the same person to disturb him twice—but (*calling*) here, Martin! Martin!

Enter MARTIN.

MARTIN.

My Lord Baron?

JULIUS.

Here is a lady who is inquiring for Doctor Löwe. I take my leave. (*Aside.*) Now fortune smile upon us! (*He goes out.*)

ANNA, MARTIN.

MARTIN (*looking at her from head to foot.*)

A lady, did he say? truly a pretty lady! (*Aloud.*) You want to speak to Dr. Löwe, child? you must wait a bit, for he's gone out a few minutes ago to see after some other poor body.

ANNA (*aside*).

What, in the name of heaven, must I look like?

MARTIN.

Are you sick?

ANNA.

No—it is not I—I was sent—

MARTIN.

O, a poor servant-wench, then? You must be tired—sit ye down. [*Gives her a chair.*

ANNA (*seating herself: aside*).

Really the scene begins to amuse me. What would the adorers of the rich heiress say, if they could see me here in the character of a *pauvre honteuse?*

MARTIN.

With your leave, my dear, I'll draw a chair too, and just do my best to amuse you with

my talk; for, in spite of your out-o'-the-way dress, you're a pretty girl enough, and it's a long time since I had a bit of chat with a pretty girl.

[*He draws his chair close to her.*

ANNA (*drawing back her chair a little*).

Have you been long in the doctor's service?

MARTIN.

Twenty years or so; we were young men together—ahem!

ANNA.

Are you satisfied with him?

MARTIN.

With him? ay, God wot, but with no one else in the world.

ANNA.

And why, may I ask?

MARTIN.

Because every one in the world has wronged him—ay, every one.

ANNA.

Your master?

MARTIN.

My master. Now, for instance, what would you say to a father, a rich merchant, who might have left his three children well off in the world, and as good as disinherited two of them, to buy an estate and a patent of nobility for the eldest?

ANNA.

Did your Doctor's father do so?

MARTIN.

Ay, did he, and my master would not have recourse to the law, as he was advised, against such crying injustice.

ANNA.

That pleases me rather.

MARTIN.

Well, it didn't please me at all: so, as he was to have nothing, they wanted to make a soldier of him. He didn't like that, and so they sent him to the university to study the law; and just then, d'ye see, he got acquainted with a young girl, one Mamsell Marie, a daughter of Hofrath Werner.

ANNA.

And he loved her?

MARTIN.

Ay, they were a lovely, loving pair; one heart, one soul between them. But my master's father and mother, *they* wouldn't hear of the match—for why? because the girl hadn't no money, and he must be sent off without taking leave of her.

ANNA (*drawing her chair nearer*).

Your master begins to interest me.

MARTIN.

But he wrote to her—ay, did he! and I carried the letters myself; but shortly after his departure, poor Mamsell Marie——(*Anna draws her chair nearer with an expression of increasing interest.*)—ah! she fell sick and died!

ANNA.

Poor, poor girl!

MARTIN.

For my part, I think she just died of heart-break and sorrow; but my master won't believe no such thing. He thinks she wasn't rightly treated in her last illness; and so, as he says, to spare others the grief he had suffered himself, he all of a sudden gave up the law, and took to studying physic.

ANNA.

You make me all impatience to see him!

MARTIN.

Wait a bit—wait a bit; you won't be in love with him when you do see him, for he dresses himself queerly. Well, and so, as I was saying, he betook himself to physic, but that didn't please his parents neither; and at first they took his allowance away from him. At last, however, they began to be proud of him, when all the learned professors were singing his praises. He

carried off the most brilliant testimonies from the university; in the city every body consulted Doctor Löwe; it was as if the blessing of Heaven was visibly on his doings;—for he saved his mother's life in a most dangerous sickness. And at last, when both parents were dead, he was able to dower his sister, and to pay the debts with which his eldest brother, the baron, had encumbered his estate. So ever since he has just lived quietly on, prescribing for poor and rich, and every day visiting the grave of Mamsell Marie; and so he might be very happy in his own way, if his nephew didn't plague him.

ANNA.

Your master has a nephew, then?

MARTIN.

Why, don't you know—the young Baron von Löwenberg——

ANNA.

Löwenberg!

MARTIN.

Why, you spoke to him—he was the smart young man that showed you in here. Now the family's ennobled, they have tacked another syllable to their name.*

* The humorous allusion here is untranslatable; "Seit die Familie geadelt ist, schleppt der Löwe den Berg hinter sich drein." Löwe signifies a lion—Berg is a mountain. Martin says,

ANNA.

Doctor Löwe the uncle of Julius!

[*A knocking at the door.*

MARTIN.

Who's a knocking there? Come in.

Enter CATHARINE.

CATHARINE (*pale and breathless*).

Is the Doctor at home?

MARTIN.

No, but I think he'll be in soon.

CATHARINE.

Directly?—for I can't wait. My son, my Philip, has taken the fever since yesterday, and I can't leave him alone.

MARTIN.

I'll tell the Doctor that you have been here.

CATHARINE.

Do so, and beg of him to come over to us as soon as he can—do you hear? I lay it on your soul.*

" since the family has been ennobled the mountain has been tacked on to the lion's tail."

* "Ich lege es Ihm auf die Seele!" this is an Irish as well as a German adjuration. Throughout this scene the supposed relation between the three speakers is marked by the form of address. Martin uses towards the two women the third person singular feminine, which places them on a level with himself. Catharine addresses him in the third person singular, but, in addressing Anna, she uses with feminine tact the respectful third person plural. Anna ad-

ANNA.

What has happened to you, my good woman? Your brow bleeds.

CATHARINE.

'Tis nothing, madam; I don't get over the paving stones as I used to do; and just at the corner of the street, trying to get out of the way of a carriage, I fell.

ANNA.

Sit down! (*She takes off Catharine's cap, and smoothes the hair back from her face.*) You are really much hurt—there is no time to lose. (*To Martin.*) A sponge—quick. (*She wipes Catharine's brow.*) If the Doctor would but come!

CATHARINE.

Let me go, pray, ma'am! with us poor folks such things cure of themselves. I *must* go home —indeed I must.

ANNA (*holding her*).

You must not go into the open air thus exposed; let me try what my small skill can do. (*To Martin.*) Can I have some sticking plaster?

dresses her in the second person plural, which is less familiar than the Du, and more respectful than the third person singular. These significant shades in the conversation could only be expressed in English by the insertion of a word, or slightly altering the turn of the phrase.

MARTIN.

Enough, at a pinch, for the giant Goliath himself.

ANNA.

Give it to me.

[*Martin gives her the sticking plaster, which she applies carefully to Catharine's wound.*

MARTIN (*aside*).

She has served in a surgeon's family, I'd swear.

Doctor Löwe appears at the door; seeing Anna busied in attendance on Catharine, he stops for a few moments, and then advances.

LÖWE.

Ho, ho! who is meddling with my office here?

MARTIN.

My master! the Doctor!

ANNA.

Doctor Löwe! (*aside.*) Good heavens! the man is not so very old!

LÖWE.

I've just heard of your exploits, Dame Catharine, as I came along, and am here in consequence. What put it in your head, at your age, to be running through the streets alone? Of

your son I heard from your landlord, the carpenter, and I was thinking of going over to him, though there's not the least danger at present. (*Looking at Anna.*) Who is that young woman?

ANNA (*aside*).

I have no courage to speak.

MARTIN.

I don't know: she has been here for the last quarter of an hour.

LÖWE.

You have been putting on the sticking-plaster —let me see—(*he examines Catharine's brow*)— good—very well indeed—couldn't have done it better myself; you let the wound bleed first?

ANNA.

Yes, Doctor.

LÖWE.

Why, you are quite a female surgeon.

ANNA.

I lived long in the country, and there necessity teaches such experience; the poor peasants so seldom know how to help themselves!

LÖWE.

So your assistance was required on all sides, and never refused in time of need, ha? You seem a very good sort of girl—what is your name?

ANNA (*faltering*).

Anna—I was sent here to request your attendance on a sick lady, Madame von Stürmer.

LÖWE.

Stürmer! not the same who was under Doctor Richter's care?

ANNA.

The same.

LÖWE.

She! why, she is half cracked, Doctor Richter says.

ANNA.

Perhaps a little capricious and self-willed; but do you pity only the diseased in body, and not those who are diseased in mind?

LÖWE.

What's the matter with her?

ANNA.

You will hear that from herself;—only have patience with her.

LÖWE.

Does she keep her bed?

ANNA.

O no! she receives company—goes out——

LÖWE.

And sends a young girl like you running through the streets in such weather as this? Ex-

cuse me, but this Madame Stürmer of yours displeases me sovereignly.

ANNA.

She is old——

LÖWE.

So ought to have more sense. I did not observe till this moment in what condition you are—why, your clothes are quite wet—you shiver—you are in a fair way to pay for the caprices of your lady with an inflammation on the lungs. Martin, here, quick, a glass of Hungarian wine.

ANNA.

I thank you, Doctor, but indeed—I cannot now——

LÖWE.

Or stay—a spoonful of my drops—better still;—(*he takes a phial from the table, and pours some drops into a spoon:*)—you must take it—absolutely. We doctors suffer no contradiction.

ANNA.

Well, then, to make you easy.—(*She takes it from him.*)

LÖWE.

And now make haste home—it has done raining.

ANNA.

Will you not go home with me?

LÖWE.

Excuse me, but I do not much like the idea of encountering your lady.

ANNA.

How shall I ever have the courage to appear before her without you? Good Doctor, have some compassion on me at least:—visit the old lady for my sake!

LÖWE (*looks at her stedfastly for a moment*).

For your sake? Yes!—but first I must go see my friend Catharine's son—(*he takes Catharine hastily by the hand*)—come, good mother!

ANNA.

Do not be long, pray!

LÖWE.

Don't fear me—(*goes to the door and returns*)—for your sake, remember, and only for your sake!

[*He goes out with Catharine, Martin opening the door. Anna looks after him with emotion, and then follows slowly.*

The curtain falls.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE—*The house of Madame von Stürmer.*

MADAME VON STÜRMER, *seated*—BARON RIEDLER *with a newspaper in his hand.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

O leave off, I beseech you! what do I care for the Spaniards, the Belgians, or the Greeks? If all these foolish people were of my way of thinking, they would never trouble themselves with making revolutions.

RIEDLER.

Shall I then, to revive you, read you some of the fatal accidents? or the announcement of deaths in the paper?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Deaths! alas! I shall soon see my own there!

RIEDLER.

Here is a charade; would you like to guess it?

MADAME STÜRMER.

No.

RIEDLER.

What would you like to do?

MADAME STÜRMER.

To die!

RIEDLER.

Nay, in pity to your friends——

MADAME STÜRMER (*bursting into a rage*).

Can you conceive what that girl Anna is about, that she is not yet returned? 'Tis more than an hour since she went, and Doctor Löwe doesn't live out of the world, I presume. But I suppose she is exchanging compliments with her beaux, or chatting with her friends, or standing before the milliner's shop-window—or——

RIEDLER.

In such weather—raining and blowing!—that were a strange fancy!

MADAME STÜRMER.

What do you mean by rain?—it has not rained for the last half hour; and if I *do* send the girl out now and then in bad weather, I do it on

principle—to make her hardy—(*the clock strikes*)—there—it is striking eleven. I feel myself ill—I know not how—I shall die—I shall expire of exhaustion, if some restorative is not at hand! My good friend—my dear baron—the sun is coming out—you know where Doctor Löwe is to be found—would it be asking too much—to entreat you——

RIEDLER (*quickly*).

To go for the doctor myself?—(*with dignity*) I go, madam—I fly! Too much to ask? as if a dying saint had not a right to demand the twelve labours of Hercules. (*Aside.*) I would rather run barefoot from this to Rome than endure the *tête-à-tête* for another five minutes.

[*He hurries out.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Now there's a man whose heart is in the right place! On the whole, one often finds in the stronger sex more sympathy for one's sufferings than in the tender sex, as they call us women. Tender, indeed!—tender in frame, and strong enough in spirit (*looking around her;*)—but haven't they left me alone—all alone? Who knows but I might fall into a swoon? Henriette,—(*she rings*)—Henriette!—(*rings again*)—Henriette!

Enter HENRIETTE.

HENRIETTE.

Your ladyship's commands?

MADAME STÜRMER.

You must stay here—stay by me. What do you think of Miss Anna's activity? I'll send her some of these days for Death—when I want him.

HENRIETTE.

My young lady has been at home this quarter of an hour; she is now changing her dress.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Ay, indeed?—assuredly, when the young lady is at her toilette, her sick mother may wait her leisure!

HENRIETTE.

She came home in a terrible state: there wasn't a dry thread upon her, and her bonnet is only fit to be thrown away.

MADAME STÜRMER.

It doesn't signify—it was worn out already: but where is Doctor Löwe?—where is he, I say?

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

I wish he would only come and give her a dose of ratsbane!

Enter ANNA.

MADAME STÜRMER.

So, at last!

ANNA.

Doctor Löwe, mamma, will be here immediately: he has only to visit a sick person.

MADAME STÜRMER.

So you have not brought him with you, then? Gone to a sick person, indeed!—and pray what am I?—am I in health?

ANNA.

He promised to make as much haste as possible.

MADAME STÜRMER.

There—it's easy to see that he will not come till evening, or perhaps not at all, and nobody's fault but yours!

[*Löwe appears at the door, but without entering.*

MADAME STÜRMER (*running on*).

Who would ever let a physician out of their hands, when they once had him? You should have held him fast by the arm, and dragged him to the house. I would have done so with a physician, if any one *I* loved had been ill; but there was the pretty dress spoiled: you must needs trick yourself out, trim up your hair, and what not—

LÖWE (*advancing*).

Ho! ho! ho!—my good lady—(*Aside.*) The devil's in the woman!

MADAME STÜRMER.

Who is the gentleman?

ANNA.

Even Doctor Löwe himself.

MADAME STÜRMER.

So!—Doctor Löwe, I am quite delighted.—Henriette, run quick into Broad Street after Baron Riedler, and tell him the doctor has come.

HENRIETTE (*aside*).

I shall do no such thing; a little exercise will do the fat gentleman all the good in the world.

[*She goes out.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Poor Riedler!—(*to Anna*)—there's another of your blunders.

LÖWE.

Don't put yourself in such a heat; the girl—(*looking towards Anna, who is now elegantly dressed*)—the young lady, I mean, is not in fault. And so you are ill?

MADAME STÜRMER.

As you must perceive too well.

LÖWE.

So then—let me feel your pulse. (*Madame Stürmer gives him her hand.*)

Tolerable; and that your lungs are in perfectly good order I had proof as I entered. Where are you affected?

MADAME STÜRMER.

In my health.

LÖWE.

Take comfort, for that is the case with all patients. (*Aside.*) Crazy old woman! (*Aloud.*) Have you any appetite?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Never; but I eat sometimes without caring what; I find it necessary to restore that prostration of strength——

LÖWE.

I understand. Do you sleep?

MADAME STÜRMER.

I have a sort of nervous sleep, which I am obliged to obtain by artificial means.

LÖWE.

By the use of opium?

MADAME STÜRMER.

No, by music.

LÖWE.

Are you able from time to time to join in public amusements?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Alas! I force myself to go out, because solitude kills me.

LÖWE.

So, so; I now understand your disease perfectly.

MADAME STÜRMER.

How!—and yet I have not explained the particulars.

LÖWE.

There is no necessity: you are sick of a disease which we doctors call *otium morosum*, and I will write you a prescription immediately.

MADAME STÜRMER.

I shall never completely recover my health.

LÖWE.

Why not? True, you will require the extremest care during the rest of your life.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Ah—yes! I feel it too well. Anna, do you hear that?

LÖWE.

All agitation and emotion of every kind must be avoided.

MADAME STÜRMER.

There—you hear that?

ANNA (*half reproachfully*).

Doctor Löwe!——

LÖWE.

Let me alone. (*To Madame Stürmer.*) When I

say disturbance of mind, I do not mean all occasion for such—for that were impossible in this world—but I mean from all outward expression of it.

MADAME STÜRMER.

And what am I to do when people put me in a passion?

LÖWE.

Overcome it, madam, which will do you more good than if you had never been put out of temper at all.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Will you not order me something?

LÖWE.

Yes, some pills of my invention; but you must remember that they will turn to poison in your vitals, if, on any occasion whatever, you allow yourself to be agitated by anger after once you have swallowed them.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Anna, remember that! My dear Doctor, tell all my people, I conjure you.

LÖWE (*with ironical solemnity*).

They shall all hear it from me. (*Aside, as he goes to the writing-table.*) I am turning quack here, but 'tis all for that sweet girl's sake—(*he writes*).

ANNA (*aside, following him to the table*).

Doctor! I entreat!—

LÖWE.

Allow me, I beg. (*Aloud.*) Da panem, salem, et aquam—mundus vult decipi. (*To Anna.*) Be so good as to send that to the apothecary in the market-place: he knows me.

ANNA (*takes the prescription, and looks in Löwe's face, half laughing*).

Send *this* to the apothecary?

LÖWE (*with surprise*).

What! you smile!—you laugh at my prescription?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Christian! Christian!

Enter CHRISTIAN.

CHRISTIAN.

Madam?

MADAME STÜRMER (*to Löwe*).

Give it to me, pray.

[*Löwe takes the prescription from Anna's hand, and gives it to Madame Stürmer, who reads it.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

Decipi—is not that a sort of root?

LÖWE.

Excuse me, it is not proper that patients should understand their doctor's prescriptions.

MADAME STÜRMER.

There is no musk in it?

LÖWE.

Not a particle, on my honour. (*He gives the prescription to the servant.*) To the apothecary in the market-place. [*Christian goes out.*

LÖWE (*to Madame Stürmer*).

And now, madam, to prepare for the operation of my medicine, lie down on your bed, and try to get a little of that nervous sleep you talked of.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Come, Anna.

LÖWE (*approaching Anna with great animation*).

So you are smiling still? young lady, as I am a true man, you understand Latin! is it not so?

ANNA (*in a whisper*).

Only for domestic use!

MADAME STÜRMER.

Come, Anna—don't you hear?

LÖWE.

You understand Latin—you will get on in the world! [*Madame Stürmer and Anna go out.*

LÖWE (*after a pause*).

I can hardly recover from my astonishment; there is not such another creature in the world,

as patient as she is intelligent—as learned as she is modest—and, with all these attractions, condemned to wait on this fool of a woman. I cannot believe that she is what I supposed her this morning; she must be a sort of companion—but what treatment for such a being! when I think of it, I could get into such a rage with that Madame Stürmer as I never felt against any one in my life before. She is my aversion, that woman—I cannot endure her. I know not what has come over me for the last hour or two; but 'tis clear that if the young Englishwoman whom Julius wishes to marry should resemble this girl—this Anna—I should not have the heart to condemn him. Perhaps, after all, it may be possible that a man *may* love twice in his life—every body says so, why should I alone be incredulous?

Enter RIEDLER.

RIEDLER.

Do I see right—you here, Doctor?

LÖWE.

Well, sir?

RIEDLER.

Do you know where I come from? even from your own lodging, where I went by command of

Madame von Stürmer to look for you. I must have passed you without seeing you, for otherwise I cannot conceive——

LÖWE.

Well, well, it's all right, Baron Riedler, and I am not sorry to have met you; you are a friend of my nephew, and must know something of his position. He is in love with a rich English girl, it seems—a Miss Temple—do you know the lady?

RIEDLER (*aside*).

Miss Temple—a master-stroke of Julius! (*Aloud.*) Know her?—O yes.

LÖWE.

And what do you think of her?

RIEDLER.

I?—that she's handsome, clever, amiable—but a little formal and tiresome, that's all—not quite to my own taste.

LÖWE (*aside*).

That gives me rather a good opinion of her.

RIEDLER (*aside*).

So I have caught him at the outset.

LÖWE (*aloud*).

She is apparently not in the great world?

RIEDLER.

She *might* be so if she liked, but she does not.

LÖWE.

That pleases me. And you think that my nephew is in love—what in my young days was called in love—really?

RIEDLER.

He loves her to distraction!

LÖWE.

Don't you think her rank and riches have had some share in kindling this said love?

RIEDLER.

Never suppose such a thing.

LÖWE (*aside*).

My poor Julius!—and yet (*with vexation*) who told him to go fluttering round pretty women?—he who had already made his choice;—in his position I don't see the necessity; if he had been a physician indeed—a physician has no choice in these matters—(*the sounds of a harp are heard from the apartment of Madame Stürmer*). What's that?

RIEDLER.

It must be Miss Anna playing on the harp.

LÖWE.

Anna? so!

RIEDLER.

She plays charmingly—but her talent is converted into a curse; for whenever the old lady

wishes to sleep, Miss Anna must play for her till she closes her eyes.

LÖWE.

At night too?

RIEDLER.

At night—and sometimes from night till morning.

LÖWE.

That's an abominable woman, that Madame Stürmer;—why does the young lady remain in her service?

RIEDLER.

Why, my dear sir, she is not in her service!

LÖWE.

No! why, what is she then?

RIEDLER.

Her step-daughter.

LÖWE.

Good heavens! and I took her at first for the waiting-maid!

RIEDLER.

Ay, it happens to others—she is wretchedly poor!

LÖWE.

Her poverty is no reason why she should allow herself to be so treated, for she possesses that which outweighs all gifts of fortune—talents and acquirements which will carry her through the world; stay, don't speak—

let me listen;—charming—delicious—on mine honour!

RIEDLER (*aside*).

I begin to think he is really half in love—that were admirable!

LÖWE.

How sweet! what expression! and such a one can dress wounds—and read Latin—(*the sounds grow fainter and fainter—and at last cease*)—so, now it is over!

RIEDLER.

The old lady is asleep, I presume.

LÖWE.

Pleasant dreams to her!

Enter ANNA.

ANNA.

You here still, my dear Doctor? Baron von Riedler too! what are your commands?

RIEDLER.

Mine? nothing in the world; having had the honour to introduce Doctor Löwe to you, I have nothing more to do here: he is a great man—a very great man. Now you have him, lady, hold him fast, I advise you,—hold him fast!

[*He goes out.*

LÖWE.

I ought to beg your pardon a thousand times, my good young lady, for the reception I gave

you this morning; I have just learned that you are the daughter of the house, and I mistook you for——for——

ANNA.

For the femme de chambre, did you not? You owe me certainly no apology on *that* account: but to make my mother's weakness a matter of jest——

LÖWE.

Jest! my dear young lady, I was never given to jesting in my life:—but it is plain, notwithstanding your medical skill, that you are not a regular physician yet, or you would know that such harmless tricks are among the privileges of our art. What are we to do when patients insist on taking physic, and yet are better without it?—must we poison them?

ANNA (*smiling*).

My mother is—I must confess——

LÖWE.

In better health than either you or I, and plays the invalid only to torment people. Believe me, my dear young lady, that in what I have done I was thinking chiefly of your advantage—for you appear to me to be suffering a martyrdom here.

ANNA.

My naturally gay spirits help me over much that is disagreeable—and, after all, are we not placed in the world to bear with each other?

LÖWE.

But your burthen chances to be somewhat of the heaviest: this woman will be the death of you, if you do not take care.

ANNA.

She was not always what you see her now.

LÖWE.

No? Then she had better have remained as she was!

ANNA.

The lapse of years—much suffering——really, Doctor, you seem to be prejudiced against her!

LÖWE.

She provokes me past endurance.*

ANNA.

The first impression is not pleasant, I allow; she is a little capricious and inconsistent—but she is not really ill-natured.

LÖWE.

Not far from it.

ANNA.

Pray have patience with her!

LÖWE.

I will try—for your sake I will try, but it will be difficult.

* Sie bringt mich in Harnisch, "she makes me put on armour," is the common German idiom—very expressive of their ancient warlike habits.

ANNA.

She was my father's beloved wife—was kind to me often when I was a child; I can never forget *that*.

LÖWE (*aside*).

What a heavenly disposition! (*Aloud.*) Nor do I wish that you should be ungrateful—but you must not continue to live with her—this, as a physician, I must forbid: I know you have the means of existence, independent of her.

ANNA.

I never will forsake her, that I have vowed, as long as I depend on myself.

LÖWE.

But should you marry, for example?

ANNA.

Then, of course, I must be directed by the wishes of my husband.

LÖWE.

Would you have any objection to marry?

ANNA.

Doctor Löwe!

LÖWE.

I mean, supposing that a suitable match were proposed to you?

ANNA (*aside*).

Where will this lead to?

LÖWE.

Young lady, I do not ask out of idle curiosity;

but you see — I think — perhaps I know a man—

ANNA (*aside*).

Julius must have told him all!

LÖWE.

A man who would esteem himself most happy, if you would venture to confide your future fate to him.

ANNA (*timidly*).

You may speak openly, my dear Doctor; I think I know whom you mean.

LÖWE.

Is it possible?—can it be?—and you would not be averse to accept his hand?

ANNA (*looking down*).

On the contrary——

LÖWE.

Do not speak hastily; and before you resolve, let me represent one or two things to you. In the first place, you are noble, and he is the son of an honest, but plebeian tradesman.

ANNA.

I know it already, and think it no obstacle.*

* Such a sentiment would hardly have been uttered thirty or forty years ago. A German girl in Anna's position would then have regarded such an obstacle as almost insurmountable. Intermarriages between the noble and the Bürgerliche classes have become since the French war—that general break up of old prejudices and old institutions—by no means so uncommon as they had been previously. It must not, however, be forgotten that Anna

LÖWE.

And, in the second place, could you endure patiently the habits of an old bachelor?

ANNA (*aside*).

I presume he wishes to reside with us.

LÖWE.

An old bachelor has always some peculiarities, which, however harmless in themselves, are likely to be disagreeable to a lady.

ANNA.

In a man whom she reveres, a woman willingly puts up with such trifles.

LÖWE (*joyfully*).

Indeed!—even a few twittering birds—even a cross old valet?

ANNA (*smiling*).

I think I could learn to love the birds, and even the old valet, for his sake.

LÖWE.

You are an angel! Well, then—what was I going to say?

Enter MARTIN *in haste.*

MARTIN.

Sir! Doctor!

is intended to represent an English girl; and the Germans entertain rather exaggerated ideas of the independent manners and notions of young Englishwomen.

LÖWE.

Now, what the devil brought you here?

MARTIN.

Now only guess whom I have just spoken to!

LÖWE.

I won't—I've something else in hand! Go home! go home!—d'ye hear?

MARTIN.

What's the matter now, sir? I thought you would have been glad to hear——

LÖWE.

Then you thought wrong.

MARTIN.

That your friend Kriegsrath Lindner is in town.*

LÖWE.

Lindner here?

MARTIN.

And Miss Caroline with him.

LÖWE.

Where are they lodged?

MARTIN.

At the Crown Inn: the Kriegsrath is most impatient to see your honour.

LÖWE (*aside*).

I must go, it seems, and look after both father

* Kriegsrath signifies properly *counsellor of war*—an official title for which we have no equivalent.

and daughter. Julius is right after all; and Caroline has forgotten him, as he has her. Heaven grant it be so! that I may make the boy happy without wounding my conscience.

ANNA.

I will not detain you, Doctor, if you have business.

LÖWE.

I have truly, and I think it will be better to get it off my hands before we resume our conversation.

ANNA.

Will you not visit my mother again to-day?

LÖWE.

Yes; but I hope it will please her to be asleep.

ANNA.

Au revoir, then! [*She curtsies, and goes out.*

LÖWE (*looks after her for a moment, then walks up and down, and, stopping suddenly, speaks in a resolute tone*).

Yes, I'll marry her!

[*Goes out, Martin following.*

The curtain falls.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The Doctor's Apartment.*

MARTIN (*alone*).

I WISH I could find out now what in the name of wonder has possessed my master: he is quite transmogrified, as it were — quite rebellious! First he abuses me when I tell him of the colonel's arrival; then he sets off to him, humming a tune as he goes along through the streets; then, when he comes home, he locks himself up in his study, writes a letter, and gives it to Rosine to take, and not to me. I begin to be afeard it's not all right: suppose he were to get crazed in his old age—O Lord! O Lord!

Enter LÖWE.

LÖWE.

Martin, I have been talking to the Kriegsrath Lindner. I have spoken to Caroline, and I am happier than words can express!

MARTIN.

How so, your honour?

LÖWE.

Caroline—only think, Martin—she is betrothed!—'twas as if a millstone had fallen from my heart when I heard it.

MARTIN.

How so, your honour?

LÖWE.

Ah! I remember me you know nothing about it. (*Aside.*) Now I have the means of soothing Julius, if he should be vexed with his uncle's marriage; but he shall know nothing of his happiness yet—I will surprise him. (*Aloud.*) Martin, what I have just told you is between ourselves.

MARTIN.

Why, your honour has told me nothing yet!

LÖWE (*looking round*).

This room is in horrible disorder, Martin.

MARTIN.

It is just as it always is.

LÖWE.

Everything covered with dust.

MARTIN.

And yet it is swept every Easter and every Michaelmas.

LÖWE.

I'll have it swept every day; people are coming in from time to time, and it's scandalous to see the dust flying int'heir faces. (*Looking round again*)—what a household! the bookcases empty, the books lying about on tables and chairs——

MARTIN (*sulkily*).

I'm not to meddle with them.

LÖWE.

No, not you—certainly; I'll put them in their places myself.

MARTIN (*aside, shaking his head*).

He's a going to die!*

LÖWE.

Martin!

MARTIN.

Sir!

LÖWE.

This Madame von Stürmer, whom I have just

* It is a German, as well as an Irish and a Scotch superstition, that any sudden and unaccountable change in the manners and disposition is the certain prelude of death.

taken under my care, will give me a good deal of trouble.'

MARTIN.

That's the lady that sent the pretty maid here this morning?

LÖWE.

The maid happens to be a young lady, and her daughter.

MARTIN.

A lady! and I treated her just as my equal!* but it's not my fault, however. If she's a lady, why doesn't she dress like one—more reasonable like?

LÖWE.

The dress makes the woman and the man too—eh, Martin? Ay, it's inconceivable what effect dress has, even on the most rational people. I think I might dress better myself.

MARTIN (*frightened*).

Pray, sir,—I hope you won't begin to think of such a thing!

LÖWE.

And why not?

MARTIN.

At your years!

* Martin remembers with consternation that he had used the wrong pronoun when addressing her: Ein Fräulein! und ich habe sie par "höre Sie" tractirt!

LÖWE.

Why, I am not such an old man, Martin.

MARTIN.

But we are no longer young, your honour.

LÖWE.

How?—*we!*—you talk as if we were nearly of the same age.

MARTIN.

Why, when I first attended on you at the university, we were both hearty young fellows.

LÖWE.

Ay, but I was eighteen, and you forty.

MARTIN.

Only nine-and-thirty, your honour.

LÖWE.

And I shall be eight-and-thirty in September.

MARTIN.

As your honour pleases.

LÖWE.

Martin, I shall go to that tailor who keeps all kinds of fashionable clothes ready made, and I'll choose myself a new coat.

MARTIN.

Then you'll look just like a wasp.

LÖWE.

No, no—no such thing: he has coats fit for rational people to wear.

MARTIN (*aside*).

If I could 'only conjure him out of this paroxysm! (*Aloud.*) Have you been to the churchyard to-day, sir?

LÖWE.

To the churchyard?—no.

MARTIN.

Then you'll go this evening?

LÖWE.

I don't think I will.

MARTIN.

The weather's cleared up, sir.

LÖWE.

Glad of it; but I feel as if—and yet what should hinder me? (*Aside.*) My good Marie! she too would rejoice if she knew how happy I am going to be. Shall I therefore forget *her?* O no, never!

MARTIN.

My dear master, either you are ill, or there is something on your mind that you can't get over.

LÖWE.

Why, there *is* something on my mind, Martin, if you will know it—something—but you must not laugh at me, Martin! What would you say if I——

MARTIN.

Well, sir?

LÖWE.

If now, for instance, I——

MARTIN.

If what?

LÖWE.

If—I—should——

MARTIN.

If you should?——

LÖWE.

If I—you see—if I should marry—a wife!——

MARTIN (*in terror*).

The Lord in heaven shield you!

LÖWE (*angrily*).

The Lord might shield me from worse, I think.

Enter JULIUS.

JULIUS.

My dear uncle——

LÖWE.

What brings *you* here?

JULIUS.

Have you a few minutes to spare me?

LÖWE.

Now?—not the fraction of a minute.

JULIUS.

It concerns the happiness of my life.

LÖWE.

O so!—(*smiling playfully*)—I know now what you mean; but put it out of your head, Julius—it won't do, Julius; but, in the mean time, I'm glad you are come, Julius, that I may inform you of my intended marriage—(*speaking rapidly and resolutely, as if to hide his confusion*)—I'm going to marry the daughter of Madame von Stürmer: the contract will be signed to-morrow—the wedding will be this day week—I invite you to both—good morning! [*He hurries out.*

JULIUS (*looking after him with amazement*).

What is all this?

MARTIN (*crying*).

He's a going to be married!

JULIUS.

To the daughter of Madame Stürmer?

MARTIN.

How should I know?

JULIUS.

But how came such an idea into his head?

MARTIN.

That's just what I say. Hasn't he been for eighteen years living for Mamsell Marie that's dead? and now, all at once—O Lord!—some evil spirit has got hold on him! [*He goes out.*

JULIUS.

Kriegsrath Lindner and his daughter here!—

my uncle in love with Anna!—how shall I disentangle such a perplexed knot?

Enter BARON RIEDLER.

RIEDLER.

Have I found you at last? I have been running over half the town after you. Do you know that Lindner and his daughter are here?

JULIUS.

I know it, and came to make one more attack on my uncle's heart before he had seen his friend, but I must have come too late; for with more severity and decision than ever, he desired me to give up all hopes.

RIEDLER.

Would it not be possible to get Caroline on your side? she is just one of those sentimental young ladies who delight in making victims of themselves.

JULIUS.

I will see Caroline no more—her first glance would go through me like a poniard! I cannot recover the painful impression which I felt when I heard she was so near me. She loved me once, as I loved her, truly, and my conduct has not been what it ought towards her.

RIEDLER.

Is your uncle at home?

JULIUS.

No, he has gone out, heaven only knows where; his head is turned, it seems; for I must tell you that your plan has succeeded only too well—he has actually fallen in love with Anna, and wants to marry her.

RIEDLER.

Marry her! ha, ha, ha! that's worth any money! has he proposed yet?

JULIUS.

I know not, but I know he considers the affair so certain, that he has invited me to the signing of the contract to-morrow.

RIEDLER.

Stay—one moment; I have an idea—sublime, —even if it be not particularly new. To-morrow, does he say, he will have the contract signed?

JULIUS.

Have I not told you so already?

RIEDLER.

Well, then, to-morrow he shall sign your marriage contract with Anna. Did your uncle ever read Molière?

JULIUS.

Hardly, I should think.

RIEDLER.

Then we will play him a scene out of Molière: but first it will be necessary for me to obtain, through you, the name of the notary he intends to employ.

JULIUS.

That will not cost me much trouble.

RIEDLER.

Very good; as soon as I know it, I will go to the man, and either through cunning or bribery, according as I find him, I will get him to prepare your contract, and place it before your uncle for his signature, instead of his own.

JULIUS.

The plan is scarce practicable.

RIEDLER.

Leave that to me.

JULIUS.

No, no, it were a vile trick——

RIEDLER.

To one who, like you, sees the knife at his very throat, anything is allowable; besides, we shall probably do your uncle himself a service. He has refused his consent to your marriage, not from harshness, but a sort of exaggerated conscientiousness; and I think it will not be disagreeable to him when he finds he has done, in

perfect innocence and without knowing it, what he would have wished to do, had it not been against his principles.

JULIUS.

Ay, he will be enchanted, doubtless, particularly as he loves Anna himself!—

RIEDLER.

Why, as a sort of Cinderella, he might have been sure of her; but that the rich heiress of Lord Temple was never meant for him, I suppose he will readily allow himself.

JULIUS.

Riedler, give up the idea of it: if I were weak enough to consent to your scheme, Anna never would; she would spoil all.

RIEDLER.

Anna must be taken by surprise: she must know nothing of it till in the last moment, when she will have no alternative but to win or lose her lover for ever; and meantime it must be your care to prevent the Doctor and Anna from coming to any explanation.

JULIUS.

Riedler, you are leading me into a crooked path——

RIEDLER.

In which lies a pretty girl, with a million for her dowry. [*They go out.*

SCENE.—*The Apartment of Madame Stürmer.*

HENRIETTE (*alone*).

This Doctor is worth his weight in gold; since he has been in the house I don't hardly know my lady; she is absolutely grown tame and gentle.

Enter MADAME STÜRMER (*with a letter in her hand*).

MADAME STÜRMER (*in a soft voice*).

Here, Henriette, my dear, can you tell me where my daughter Anna is?

HENRIETTE.

I believe she is in her room, madam.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Tell her I beg she will have the goodness to come here for one moment.

HENRIETTE.

Immediately, my lady. (*Aside.*) I do think the Doctor has poisoned her, and that she's going to die. [*She goes out.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

'Tis incredible how well the Doctor's pills agree with me; I feel myself quite a changed being since I have taken them; but how I am

obliged to watch myself, and how careful I am to guard against all agitation! the moment I feel the most distant approach to it, I leave the room at once. I ought to have the Doctor always at my side; but I fear, if Anna rejects his hand, he will never enter my doors again. I must try to persuade her—I will employ all the gentlest means to move her. What is most strange, the Doctor himself does not seem to have a doubt of her consent. If she should—but no, that is impossible, for she had decided in favour of Baron Julius. I am in a most embarrassing position, but I will not lose courage, for hitherto I have always contrived to make people do exactly what I liked.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA.

You sent for me, dear madam—what are your commands?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Not *commands*, my dear child; my request rather. I have to talk to you of matters of importance; only conceive that Doctor Löwe has written me a letter!

ANNA.

Indeed!

MADAME STÜRMER.

And do you know what it is about?

ANNA.

I think I do.

MADAME STÜRMER.

You think you do? then, my dear angel, you have already agreed to his wishes?

ANNA.

I presume that cannot be unknown to you.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Not unknown! excuse me, but till this moment I never dreamt of such a thing; you have kept your intentions a secret from me.* Perhaps you feared that the change would be painful to me? But be easy, my child; your happiness is the sole object of my life.

ANNA.

I do not quite understand—of what change do you speak?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Cease this affectation, Anna! Doctor Löwe has formally asked your hand.

ANNA.

Certainly—for——

MADAME STÜRMER.

For whom but for himself?

ANNA (*in the utmost amazement*).

For himself? Impossible! you mistake!

* The German idiom is Du hast mit Deinen Planen hinter dem Berge gehalten, you kept behind the hill with your plans.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Why impossible? here is his letter—you can read it.

ANNA (*takes the letter hastily, and glances over it*).

Unfortunate mistake! I am undone!

MADAME STÜRMER.

Why do you frighten yourself so? I have no objection in the world.

ANNA (*in great agitation*).

I must have an explanation with him immediately—within this hour!

MADAME STÜRMER.

He wishes the contract to be signed to-morrow, and offers to settle on you all he has in the world.

ANNA.

O me! it breaks my heart! I was not prepared for this!

MADAME STÜRMER.

What is it that vexes you?

ANNA.

The thought that I must reject such a man.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Reject?—how can you think of such a thing as rejecting him?

ANNA.

Have I not, and with your own consent, given my word to Baron Julius?

MADAME STÜRMER.

O we will get rid of Baron Julius in some civil way.

ANNA.

Not for the world!

MADAME STÜRMER.

But if you like the Doctor, and you must like him, else you would never have allowed him to hope——

ANNA.

It never occurred to me to give him hope; he misunderstood me as completely as I mistook him.

MADAME STÜRMER.

Then I am lost! I am a dead woman!

ANNA.

Why so, dear mother?

MADAME STÜRMER.

Doctor Löwe will certainly forsake *me*, if you give him up.*

ANNA.

I should be sorry;—but no consideration of that kind can release me from the obligation of being true to the man to whom I am bound by a promise.

MADAME STÜRMER (*angrily*).

Anna! (*Commanding herself.*) Remember,

* „Wenn Du ihm einen Korb giebst,"—the German phrase for rejecting a lover: I know not whence derived.

Anna, that the Doctor has forbidden me all agitation.

ANNA (*very calmly*).

Then let us quit the subject for the present.

MADAME STÜRMER (*gently*).

What do you find so charming in the Baron? A young man with a pair of whiskers—a gallant—just like all of them.

ANNA (*in the same quiet tone*).

To be sure—you are perfectly right.

MADAME STÜRMER.

And the Doctor, on the contrary, a man of mature age—a wise man—a learned man——

ANNA (*with animation*).

Say one of the worthiest of men!

MADAME STÜRMER.

Is he not? Anna! I do conjure you, take the Doctor. (*Clasping her hands.*)

ANNA.

I *cannot* promise such a thing.

MADAME STÜRMER (*vehemently*).

No? you won't?—well, then, do as you like; I lay my death at your door, and when I am dead you will feel what you have lost.——Ah, heaven and earth! here I am in an agitation, and the Doctor says that, if that happens, the pills will turn to poison. (*In a soft voice.*) Anna, Anna, forget what I have just said! I am no egotist: it is not for my own sake I speak, but for yours

only, my dearest child, to whom the very kindness I have shown you from infancy binds me indissolubly. Believe me, who am old in experience, though not in years, the Doctor only is worthy of you—accept the Doctor! (*Aside.*) As soon as I have digested these pills, I will try stronger measures—I will——

[*Goes out hastily.*

ANNA.

Accept the Doctor? O no, impossible! but 'tis indescribable how I feel.

Enter JULIUS.

JULIUS.

My uncle will be here immediately; I was obliged to hurry in order to precede him. Do you know that he——

ANNA.

I know all, and I am as much astonished as pained: he has formally proposed to me through my mother.

JULIUS.

And what will you do?

ANNA.

That which you have too long delayed to do; explain to him honestly and openly the relation in which we stand to each other.

JULIUS.

That were to divide us for ever.

ANNA.

You do not know your uncle; he has the noblest, the kindest of hearts: and, after all, has he the power to dissolve our engagement, if your mother blesses it?

JULIUS.

I can only hope for the blessing of my mother in case my uncle gives his consent.

ANNA.

Do not doubt that he will——

JULIUS.

He has another match for me in view. Some years ago he settled that I should marry the daughter of one of his friends; and believe me that any endeavour to move him will be utterly fruitless. There is only one means left to obtain his consent.

ANNA.

And what means?

JULIUS.

For the present I must conceal it from you.

ANNA (*looking at him fixedly*).

Julius, that does not please me!

JULIUS.

Do not be uneasy, it is nothing wrong;—I believe I hear him coming already. Anna, if ever you loved me, now grant me one request.

ANNA.

What request?

JULIUS.

Do not at once refuse my uncle's hand.

ANNA.

Shall I deceive the good man?

JULIUS.

O no! but you women have always ways and means—Anna! if you now formally reject my uncle's hand, you are lost to me for ever.

ANNA (*in much agitation*).

I do not understand——

JULIUS.

Compose yourself! I hear him on the stairs. Do not forget my urgent prayer; the happiness of my life depends on your granting it—remember, Anna! [*He hurries out.*

ANNA (*after a pause*).

And even if his life and mine too depended on it, I cannot grant it. Truth at least does he deserve from me—that noble being who has honoured me by his choice, and to whom I have nothing else to give—nothing but the truth in return for all his love!

Enter LÖWE (*fashionably yet simply dressed*).

LÖWE.

I think it was my nephew who just slipped past me—was he here with you?

ANNA.

Yes, Herr Doctor. (*Aside.*) I lose all courage.

LÖWE (*smiling*).

What, the rogue! courting the good graces of his future aunt, that he may win over the uncle? But what is the matter, my dear young lady? you seem disturbed, and yet I presume that the letter I addressed to your mother could hardly have surprised you?

ANNA.

On the contrary, it surprised me in the highest degree.

LÖWE.

Because I wish to have the contract signed to-morrow? You see I have good reasons for that. Your lady mother—I mean no unkindness to her, but she is a singular person, and—I do not quite trust her; to-day I know I am in her good graces, and I believe she has received my proposals graciously—is it not so?—she is in good humour with us?

ANNA (*speaking with effort*).

She is.

LÖWE.

Now don't you see that in a week or a fortnight she might quarrel with me, and play us some shabby trick?

ANNA

You do not then feel a doubt about *my* consent?

LÖWE (*thunderstruck; after a pause*).

I know—I know I am not worthy of you; but, after what you said this morning—you remember when we spoke of a husband——

ANNA.

O let us forget that unfortunate conversation!

LÖWE.

Unfortunate! why—why unfortunate?

ANNA.

Because it will be to me, perhaps also to you, a source of lasting sorrow.

LÖWE (*mournfully*).

Sorrow!—no, not so; if you indeed repent of your kindness, I will retire at once, and without repining. I have endured life for these twenty years with my books and my birds—I can live on so—still——

ANNA (*with deep emotion*).

Löwe!

LÖWE.

Pray pardon me the liberty I have taken; I never should have presumed to think of you, had I not beheld the manner in which you are treated in this house; and I thought you might be happier as the wife of a man of honour, who was devoted to you, than under the despotism of a capricious eccentric stepmother.

ANNA (*aside, and turning from him*).

He knows not how he grieves me!

LÖWE.

You have no fortune—

ANNA (*turning to him in surprise*).

No fortune?

LÖWE.

You must not be displeased with Baron Riedler for telling me——

ANNA.

Riedler told you so?

LÖWE.

Poverty is no shame, dearest lady! and though I am not myself rich, I am well able to secure to you now and after my death, if not a large, at least a sufficient income.

ANNA.

Generous man! I care as little for riches as you do—and such a character, such a heart, would outweigh millions offered by another! I am prouder to be *your* choice than if a prince had asked my hand, and I should accept your offer at once, could I do it without wrong to another.

LÖWE.

Whom could my marriage offend?

ANNA (*with effort*).

Your nephew.

LÖWE.

My nephew!—ah, is that it? is he afraid of losing my fortune? Then let me tell you that he will not want it—for he is about to make a brilliant marriage with the rich English heiress, Miss Temple.

ANNA.

Temple! (*Aside.*) Most extraordinary this! (*Aloud.*) but they say you are against this match?

LÖWE.

True, I *was* against it, for I did not consider my nephew as a free man.

ANNA.

You had formed other plans for him?

LÖWE.

What plans? I never formed a plan in my life—matrimonial plans least of all; but you see the young man had fallen in love with a charming and amiable girl, and had paid her all the attentions of an accepted lover——

ANNA.

Is it possible?

LÖWE.

I was in some sort pledged for him in this affair—had, at his earnest request, gained over Caroline's father, and I knew that the girl had refused several good offers for his sake, trusting in his vows of eternal love. Judge now yourself what

was my alarm, my regret, when I heard, all at once, that he had made proposals to another!

ANNA.

If it be as you say, doubt not that he will return to his first love.

LÖWE.

That were now unnecessary. Caroline is here since yesterday—I have spoken to her—Julius is absolved from all ties, for it seems the lady has been, like himself, faithless, and is engaged to another.

ANNA.

May I ask who this Caroline is?

LÖWE.

The daughter of the Kriegsrath Lindner.

ANNA.

And where does she live?

LÖWE.

They are at the Crown Inn.

ANNA.

Did she seem cheerful when you saw her?

LÖWE.

No; on the contrary, rather disturbed—probably some feeling of shame, in my presence——

ANNA.

And she did not tell you to whom she was engaged?

LÖWE.

No—nor did I ask; but, my dear young lady, let me beg of you not to tell my nephew all this: to-morrow, at our betrothing, I will surprise him with my consent to his marriage—for to-morrow our contract will be celebrated—will it not?—say yes! (*taking her hand*).

ANNA.

Löwe, in one hour you shall have my answer in writing—till then, I entreat you, leave me to myself.

LÖWE.

Will you not allow me to see your mother?

ANNA.

I will make your excuses to my mother.

LÖWE.

You dismiss me, Anna, with a heavy heart.

ANNA.

My own is not light, believe me!

LÖWE.

Then I have the honour to take my leave.

[*He bows, and goes to the door.*

ANNA.

Doctor Löwe!

LÖWE (*returning quickly*).

Dearest lady!

ANNA (*with deep feeling*).

Whatever may be the issue of this, be assured

that I never esteemed a man so much—never shall esteem another—as I do you!

LÖWE (*almost in tears, which he restrains with difficulty*).

I—I have the honour—to take my leave.

[*He goes out.*

ANNA (*alone—a pause—she walks up and down in the greatest agitation—then stops*).

At the Crown Inn! this daughter of Kriegsrath Lindner—I will see her—speak to her—try her heart: she will not reproach or repulse the stranger, when she learns what are the feelings which lead me to her—and will perhaps confide to me what she conceals from her father. (*Snatches up a bonnet which lies on the sofa.*) Heaven guard and guide me! this step decides my future fate! [*She goes out.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE—*The house of Madame Stürmer.*

JULIUS—HENRIETTE.

HENRIETTE.

What in the name of goodness is going on in the house? My Lord Baron, can *you* explain the riddle that has been puzzling me since yesterday? You are the intended bridegroom of our young lady—are you not?

JULIUS.

Well?

HENRIETTE.

'Tis too late to affect mystery– either *you* are the bridegroom, or your uncle!

JULIUS.

My uncle, do you say?

HENRIETTE.

The whole house talks of nothing else but this wedding: my lady has forgotten all her complaints, and we are expecting the notary here within an hour.

JULIUS (*smiling*).

I have nothing for it but resignation.

HENRIETTE.

But, my lord—my lord—you will not surely allow the old Doctor to carry off the young lady, and her million of dollars too?

JULIUS (*smiling*).

Why not? perhaps——!

HENRIETTE (*shaking her head*).

As for my young lady, I wouldn't answer for her, for she takes such extraordinary notions sometimes!

JULIUS.

I have only to obey her wishes in all things.

HENRIETTE.

Go—go, my lord; you are only making game of me!* [*She goes out.*

JULIUS.

She has then acceded to my request, and kept my uncle in error!—but what will she say when she knows by what means we are to cut this Gordian knot?—her feelings—her principles, her

* "Sie haben mich zum Besten," is the German idiom.

whole soul will revolt against Riedler's plan, and yet, as things are, it is the only means to attain our object. It may be, that when she is assured of this, love may work a miracle for me, and may effect what neither power nor persuasion could. She comes!—I tremble like a culprit before her.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA (*her manner is cold and reserved*).

Julius! what brings *you* here?

JULIUS.

I came to thank you for granting my request, and keeping up my good uncle's delusion, though the affair has certainly become more serious than I intended.

ANNA (*coldly*).

All that has happened might have been anticipated: you knew yesterday that your uncle had fixed to-day for the betrothing.

JULIUS.

The notary will be here in a few moments.

ANNA.

It is your own fault that things have gone sofar.

JULIUS.

Anna, the next hour decides our fate——

ANNA.

I know it well.

JULIUS.

It must unite or divide us for ever!

ANNA.

Assuredly!

JULIUS.

Have you courage?——

ANNA.

Courage?—for what?

JULIUS.

To—to overcome all prejudice, and set aside—for a moment only—those principles which—O if you love me, Anna, it will be easy!—and even your conscience will suffer but slightly: love cannot always choose the straight path.

ANNA.

Julius, speak more plainly!

JULIUS.

My uncle was from the beginning opposed to my views; now that he is my rival, he will be so more than ever. Riedler—(*Anna turns away with a gesture of contempt*)—I swear to you that this is the very last time I will ever yield to his counsel—Riedler has gained over the notary, who is to draw out your marriage contract with my uncle.

ANNA.

Well?

JULIUS.

And has prevailed on him—instead——

ANNA.

Instead?——

JULIUS.

To prepare mine.

ANNA.

Say all—all you have to say at once!

JULIUS.

Anna, do not condemn me!

ANNA (*impatiently*).

To prepare yours?

JULIUS.

And to place it before my uncle for his signature, as if it were his own.

[*Anna stands silent.*

(*After a pause.*) Anna, if you know any other means of success, speak now!

ANNA.

Has Riedler your consent to this plan?

JULIUS (*shrinking from her look*).

He has; for I knew not how otherwise——

ANNA (*almost with scorn*).

So be it then!

JULIUS (*joyful, yet half doubtful*).

Then you *will* have the goodness?——

ANNA.

I will hear no more: do what you think justifiable.

[*She turns from him, folding her hands as one who had taken her resolution, and walks aside.*

Enter RIEDLER *and* LÖWE.

RIEDLER.

Here he is! here he is!—the happy bridegroom! just at the door,—the gates of the temple of Hymen, I met him coming up. (*Whispers Julius.*) Have you explained to her?

JULIUS (*whispering*).

She has consented to everything!

LÖWE (*to Anna*).

Your letter, my dear young lady, touched me almost to tears. I could hardly sleep all night for joy, and this morning had well-nigh forgotten to feed my birds. No, never shall you repent that you have deigned to accept the hand of a plain but honest man!—never—I swear it on this hand—(*he kisses her hand.*)

ANNA.

Dr. Löwe, I have read over the draft of the contract you sent to me.

LÖWE.

And are you satisfied? It is but little I can give you, dearest, but 'tis all I have in the world.

ANNA.

And you do not ask what dower I have to bring you?

LÖWE.

Your dower is your heart—your mind—your virtues!

ANNA (*smiling*).

That sounds very prettily; but I would fain not enter your house as a beggar. Even poverty has its pride; and since you have endowed me with all *your* wealth, you will allow me to secure to you in return all *I* possess, be it much or little.

LÖWE.

As you please; I will thankfully receive at your hands anything—no matter what—if that it makes you easier.

ANNA.

It does so, and I thank you. I have another request to make to you.

LÖWE.

Speak, and command me!

ANNA.

I wish that the nature of the contract should not be known, and that, after I have spoken a few words to the notary, you will consent to sign it unread.

JULIUS (*to Riedler*).

What do you say to that?

RIEDLER (*whispering*).

Rosine, in the Barbier de Seville, is nothing to her!

LÖWE.

I leave everything to you: settle the matter exactly as you like.

ANNA.

Well, then, I will go and dress;* and I beg you will let me know when the notary is here.

[*She goes out.*

LÖWE.

Charming, charming girl! Julius, I have yet to thank you for coming to-day—(*shakes hands with him warmly.*)

JULIUS.

My duty, uncle——

LÖWE.

I thank you too, Baron Riedler.

RIEDLER.

Don't mention it.

JULIUS (*to Riedler*).

I tremble at the thought of the discovery!

* At the ceremony of betrothing, when formally solemnized, the lady is always full dressed in bridal attire. For further particulars relative to this custom, the reader is referred to the following drama.

RIEDLER (*aside to him*).

Pah !—the game's your own.

JULIUS (*whispering*).

I pity my uncle.

RIEDLER (*whispering*).

Why would he be so obstinate, then?

LÖWE.

It appears, Baron Riedler, that you and my nephew have something to say to each other, and I have business here; will you have the goodness to leave me for a few minutes?

RIEDLER.

With all my heart. We will go into the garden till we are called. Come, Julius!

JULIUS (*going, turns back, and catches Löwe's hand with emotion.*)

Uncle—my dear uncle!

LÖWE (*shaking hands with him kindly*).

All's right—all's right—success to you, my dear boy!

JULIUS (*aside as he goes out*).

O no success—no blessing—will ever follow this day's work! [*He goes out with Riedler.*

LÖWE.

Martin! Martin!—now they are all gone, we can unpack the things, Martin!

MARTIN (*entering*).

Sir!

LÖWE.

Have you all the things here?

MARTIN (*in a cross tone*).

Ay, all lie in the anteroom.

LÖWE.

Come—quick—help me, or we shall not be ready.

[*He goes out, and returns carrying a stand with elegant hats and caps; Martin follows him with silks and rich stuffs; then Löwe goes out, and returns with a band-box, Martin with a veil and a shawl; Löwe at last brings in a casket of jewels: they arrange all the things on a table.*

LÖWE.

Take care not to spoil anything.

MARTIN.

Don't fear, sir.

LÖWE.

The stuffs on one side, the laces on the other, the jewels in the middle;—(*rubbing his hands with delight*)—pretty—very pretty!—though I say it!

MARTIN.

Cost a heap of money, I fancy.

LÖWE.

I care not.

MARTIN.

For the price of such a shawl, now—(*taking it up by the corner in his finger and thumb*)—you might have gone to Vienna, as you so wished.

LÖWE.

Is it not cheaper for me that I have lost even the wish to go?

MARTIN (*ready to cry*).

Ay, ay, you'll repent when once you're married.

LÖWE.

Repent?—yes—that I was not married long ago; but *then* I did not know Anna.

MARTIN.

Well, I think I'd sooner have her than some others.

LÖWE (*gaily*).

It signifies much what you think!

Enter the NOTARY.

NOTARY.

Good morning, Doctor?

LÖWE.

You here already, Herr Listner! May I beg your patience for a moment?

NOTARY.

I am so little in haste, that I was on the point of asking a few minutes' conversation alone with you, before we begin business.

LÖWE.

So! the draft of the deed which I sent to you is in your hands?

NOTARY.

Yes; and it was on that very subject——(*he looks at Martin.*)

LÖWE.

Martin, go into the garden, and tell my nephew and Baron Riedler that the notary is here.

MARTIN.

Immediately, sir. [*He goes out.*

LÖWE.

We are alone: what have you to say to me?

NOTARY.

That what I hear on one side, and what I read on the other, I am unable to reconcile. According to the draft of the marriage contract which your servant brought me this morning, it appears as if you were contemplating a marriage yourself.

LÖWE.

And whom else should it be?

NOTARY.

With Anna von Stürmer?

LÖWE.

With Anna von Stürmer.

NOTARY.

And yesterday evening Baron Riedler told me——

LÖWE.

Baron Riedler had the goodness, as I had some patients to visit, to undertake to explain my intentions to you verbally.

NOTARY.

He desired me, in your name, to prepare a marriage contract for your nephew.

LÖWE.

For my nephew?—with whom?

NOTARY.

With the same Anna von Stürmer.

LÖWE.

That is a mistake; my nephew is on the point of marrying a rich English heiress—a Miss Temple.

NOTARY.

Temple?—just so. I did not know that the young lady went by the name of Temple; but the adopted daughter and heiress of Lord Temple, and this Anna von Stürmer, are the same person.

LÖWE.

Nonsense!—Anna von Stürmer has no fortune.

NOTARY.

She is heiress to a million of dollars.*

* About one hundred and forty-two thousand pounds English money. The princess was determined to make her rich English heiress rich enough to fulfil the German ideas of English opulence.

LÖWE.

And beloved by my nephew?

NOTARY.

So Baron Riedler tells me. Be on your guard, my dear Doctor; I much fear that some deception is intended against you; for, only an hour ago, Riedler sent to offer me, in the name of the Baron, two thousand dollars down, if I would manage to conclude the affair without any further explanation with you.

LÖWE (*restraining himself*).

And you?——

NOTARY.

I agreed to everything, from a fear lest they might meet among my brotherhood with one less conscientious than myself.

LÖWE (*with a burst of anguish*).

Julius! Julius! have I deserved this from you?

NOTARY.

Perhaps you opposed his marriage?

LÖWE.

Yes, I did—I could not in conscience do otherwise; but Heaven knows I suffered more than he did!

NOTARY.

Then 'tis probable that they intended by these means to cheat you out of your signature?

LÖWE.

But that could not have been without her knowledge: and *she!*—she *could* not—ah!—(*as if struck by a sudden and frightful idea*)—now Heaven have mercy on me!—fool that I was! Did she not make me promise to sign the contract without reading it? I thought then—O misery!—(*covers his face with his hands.*)

NOTARY.

You see I am in the right.

LÖWE.

How cruelly does every recollection confirm all! how circumstance on circumstance combined to draw the net closer round me! I was to grant from blind love what I had refused on principle. For *this* was her name concealed—for *this* she first appeared in the touching garb of poverty—for *this* was my compassion to be excited! O! my heart is like to break! When I believed I was honouring virtue, I was doing homage to the vilest coquetry! Julius!—Anna!—you have conquered; but 'tis a poor triumph: it was so easy to deceive me!

NOTARY (*compassionately*).

Compose yourself!

LÖWE (*after a pause*).

She looked all innocence and truth; and I met her with a faith as boundless! Not for her for-

tune's sake, but to endow her with all I had in the world, did I seek her hand—and she!—Ay, pity me!—from my childhood upwards have I loved my fellow-creatures, and thus— thus have they ever repaid me!

NOTARY.

Command yourself! reflect that 'tis in your power to punish their ingratitude.

LÖWE.

I will do so—I will have vengeance; but it shall be in my way—not theirs.

ANNA (*opens the door of her room, and speaks without advancing*).

Mr. Notary, will you take the trouble to come into my room? I wish to speak to you: with your leave, my dear Doctor!

LÖWE (*turning towards her, but without looking at her*).

I agree to all you wish—to ALL—observe. (*Aside to the Notary.*) Go in with her, and do whatever she desires, but without betraying that you know anything of her plans.

NOTARY (*to Löwe*).

I have brought, in case of need, copies of both contracts.

LÖWE.

When she reads mine, she will see, at least, that I had no selfish purpose.

ANNA (*appears again at the door*).

My dear Doctor, time presses!

LÖWE.

Do not fear: I will no longer detain the gentleman.

[*Anna and the Notary disappear into an inner room.*

LÖWE (*alone*).

'Twas then an empty vision, this last hope of my life! it has vanished, and with it the only good left to me—that peace for which I had struggled through eighteen solitary years!—Yet who bid me turn again to the magic book of my youthful dreams to conjure up long-buried hopes and wishes to life and light? O, I have deserved it all! but Julius!—but Anna!—not from *you* should this bitter lesson have come—O not from *you!* Had she but opened her heart to me yesterday! I told her then, I was ready to sacrifice my happiness to hers; but she was afraid that jealousy would have more power over me than love and honour. This vile opinion shall she retract; I will force her to say, " Löwe is good and true!" and then farewell for ever to her and to the world;—this—this shall be my only vengeance!

Enter MADAME STÜRMER.

MADAME STÜRMER.

I understand that the notary is here, and that you only wait for my daughter. Ah, my dear Doctor, I cannot tell you how delighted I am that my Anna has decided in your favour! and, between ourselves, I think the wonderful improvement in my health has done much to influence her. Your pills, Doctor, are a life elixir; guess only what I ate last night for supper?—truffel-pie! and slept admirably after it!

LÖWE.

Eat whatever you fancy—why not?

Enter JULIUS *and* RIEDLER.

JULIUS (*aside*).

Stick by me—I lose all courage.

RIEDLER (*to Löwe*).

You allow me the honour of witnessing your marriage contract?

LÖWE (*coldly*).

Yes! you will oblige me by honouring with your signature the contract which is to be witnessed to-day. Julius, you look sad; does my happiness afflict you, Julius?

JULIUS.

You cannot surely think so, my dear uncle?

LÖWE.

Why, do I not know that an uncle's marriage is seldom agreeable to his nephew? But be satisfied; this hour shall teach you how *your* uncle's heart stands towards you.

JULIUS (*with increasing emotion*).

Do not think me insensible of all your kindness, nor deem my heart in fault, if difference of principle—if circumstances—if passion enforced me——

RIEDLER (*pulling his arm*).

Silence, or you are ruined!

LÖWE (*holding out his hand to Julius*).

'Tis well, 'tis well, my son;* but what detains the young lady?

RIEDLER.

Here she comes, and the notary with her.

Enter ANNA (*elegantly dressed as a bride, and the notary with the contract in his hand*).

MADAME STÜRMER.

You have been a preposterous time about your toilette, child; the gentlemen have been waiting hours for you.

ANNA (*smiling*).

'Twas unwillingly I delayed the moment of

* *My son* is a term of endearment in German as in French.

my happiness, but I could not help it. Pray sit down. (*To the notary, who seats himself.*)

LÖWE (*aside*).

What innocence in every feature! forgotten she cannot be—nor hated—O no! but wept—as one dead!

NOTARY.

In accordance with the wishes of the bride and bridegroom, I omit the customary reading of the articles, and invite you, ladies and gentlemen, to proceed at once to the signing of the deed. (*He unfolds the contract*).

[*Anna approaches the table, and places her handkerchief over the deed, in such a manner that only the empty space for the signatures remains visible.*

MADAME STÜRMER.

With your leave——(*attempts to push away the handkerchief.*)

ANNA.

Pardon me, dear madam; even the bridegroom must not see the contents till all have signed.

LÖWE.

If these precautions are on my account, you might have spared them, young lady. I promised to sign my name without inquiry or explanation, and a man of honour keeps his word. (*He signs.*)

RIEDLER (*whispers Julius*).

Victoria!

ANNA (*she takes the pen from Löwe's hand*).

'Tis now my turn—with joyful and stedfast heart—there! (*She signs.*)

[*Löwe, who has been watching her with a momentary eagerness, turns away mournfully.*

ANNA (*to Madame Stürmer*).

You, madam!

MADAME STÜRMER.

How willingly! (*She signs, and Anna embraces her with emotion.*)

NOTARY.

Baron Löwenberg! Baron Riedler!

RIEDLER (*to Julius, who stands irresolute*).

For shame! do it at once.

[*Julius goes to the table, and signs with a trembling hand; then Riedler.*

RIEDLER (*aside*).

The game's our own!

ANNA.

Have all signed?

NOTARY.

All.

ANNA.

Then I will now request you to read the articles.

LÖWE.

Stop, sir! 'tis unnecessary! the contents of that paper are no secret to me; I know already what I have signed, and do not retract my word.

JULIUS.

Uncle!

LÖWE.

Julius—Anna—why use me thus? why endeavour to secure by mean contrivance what fate had already prepared for you? Everything had combined to crown your wishes. Caroline was engaged—my conscience was no longer opposed to your marriage; a few hours of patience, of submission, of forbearance, and your union had been blessed—you might have been happy with the feeling that you had deserved your happiness. Do not fear that I shall now refuse from wounded pride what I only refused on principle; there remains no obstacle to your marriage; but the fairest flowers in your nuptial garland are withered—faith and good-will! God grant they may yet bloom again for you, and that your children may prove more kind to you than you have proved to me!

JULIUS.

If you knew, uncle!—if you only knew——

LÖWE.

No more—the thing is done. (*With a melancholy smile.*) Julius, you have debts, which you must

not ask your wife to pay for you on her wedding-day—that will never do, Julius! I must now tell you that I have always been your sole creditor, (*taking a paper from his pocket-book,*) and you must accept your release from all such obligations as my wedding-gift to you.

[*Tears the paper, and gives it to him.*

JULIUS.

O, if my repentance—my gratitude!—

LÖWE.

Let me hear that you become a worthy man—so am I best repaid! let me *hear* it—I repeat—for I will never *see* you more, nor *her!* I will go back to my solitude, live for my poor patients, and if my heart should ever again sigh for human sympathy, I will go to the grave of my Marie—the ono—the only being who ever truly loved me! [*He turns to go.*

ANNA.

Löwe—stay!—and O forgive me if till now I have been silent; but I could not deny myself the unspeakable delight of seeing such a character as yours displayed in all its goodness, all its greatness! You are the noblest, the best of men. Happy the woman who shall call you hers!—Thrice happy myself that I am she!

LÖWE.

You, Anna!

ANNA (*takes the contract from the table*).

This contract, which you signed unread, unites us for ever—and do you think I will give you up? —Never—O never!

NOTARY (*rising*).

I have the honour to wish you joy, Doctor Löwe!—the heiress of Lord Temple—her hand—her fortune—none can henceforth dispute with you.

RIEDLER.

I fall from the clouds! (*To the Notary.*) Sir, did you not give me your word?——

NOTARY.

To draw out a marriage contract for the Baron Julius? I have done so—here it is—see if you can find any one to sign it for you.

[*He goes out—Riedler follows him with reproaches.*

JULIUS.

Anna!

ANNA.

You do not expect that I should excuse myself to *you*, Julius? I am released from my promise to you—for you offered me a heart which you had no longer a right to bestow. What your uncle has just said must not heal your conscience. I have seen Caroline, and found means to draw her noble secret from her. She is no bride, and, should you forsake her, will never marry. Only

that she might be no obstacle to your happiness, did she venture on this, the first falsehood of her life.

JULIUS.

Is it possible? Caroline!

ANNA.

Return to her—for even if I might love you still, I *could* not: my heart, as my hand, belongs to one only—to the man whom on earth I most revere! [*She gives her hand to Löwe.*

LÖWE.

What do you say? do I hear aright,—and dare I believe it? *I* so loved? O, I do not, I do not deserve it, Marie!—'tis you have prayed for me!*

[*He stands with folded hands, and eyes upraised to heaven. Anna and Julius embrace him on either side; and Madame Stürmer contemplates the group with pleasure.*

The Curtain falls.

* This does not render the beautiful "Das hast du mir erbeten!" To obtain by prayers is expressed by the single word "erbeten" for which we have no equivalent.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY IBOTSON AND PALMER, SAVOY STREET.

THE YOUNG WARD.

(Der Zögling.)

A COMEDY.

IN FOUR ACTS.

CONTENTS

OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

REMARKS.

This charming comedy was produced for the first time at the Court Theatre at Weimar in the beginning of the year 1836: it has since been played on almost every stage in Germany, and everywhere with most deserved applause. I am afraid that my close translation will convey but a very inadequate idea of the consummate elegance of the style; but the truth and delicacy of the characters and sentiments can hardly fail to be appreciated; and every one who has resided in Germany will bear witness to the accuracy of the picture it exhibits of the manners and of the modes of thinking and feeling in the higher classes of German society.

It requires, however, a few words of explanation for the merely English reader. The heroine of the play, Countess Werdenbach, is anxious—but from no vulgar ambition—that her pupil, (or rather *protégé*,) Hallerfeld, should make what is called a brilliant *carrière*. We have not this word in the sense in which it is used in France and Germany, nor any equivalent for it—simply because we have not the *thing*. The younger sons and brothers of noble families form a numerous class in Germany, with very small fortunes, or no fortunes at all, who look to the government of the country for employment, civil or military; while the breaking up of the old order of things during the revolutionary wars threw open the highest civil and military appointments to the Bürgerliche class,—Napoleon's grand principle, "la carrière ouverte aux talents," having extended itself to Germany. Hence a considerable portion of German society is formed of the officials of

every grade under the government and the aspirants to office. In Austria this is more particularly the case; in Vienna the number of the "*Beamten*," or paid officials, is in such monstrous disproportion to the community at large, that, as I once heard it humorously remarked, one half of the people are employed in keeping the other half in order.

Now the *carrière* of a young man in Germany is his progress through the different grades of the military or civil service; he must begin by bringing a certificate of his general good conduct and acquirements, from the pastor of his parish, from the school in which he has been educated, and from the university:* these are indispensable, and they are not given lightly. I remember, for instance, when the grandsons of one of the greatest heroes of the late war,—of him who was regarded as one of the saviours of his country,—were twice sent back after the usual examination, and could not even obtain a lieutenancy, till a cabinet order (or decree) from the king himself absolved them from the qualifications required, and promoted them for the sake of the grandsire's memory —a circumstance which rendered them not so much the objects of general congratulation as of general pity. Possessed of these credentials, he commences his *carrière*, properly so called, by waiting for the first vacant lieutenancy, if he be in the military line; or, if in the civil service, by entering one of the public offices as clerk, (*without pay*,) where he works hard for three years at least, subsisting on his private resources. If during this probation he has given proof of capability and application, he is placed in the first salaried clerkship which may be vacant, and rises through the different grades of official rank till he become, if a diplomatist, *Legations-rath*, (councillor of legation;) *Legations-secretaire*; or *Gesandte accreditirt*, (accredited minister, or ambassador,) &c. If in the law, he may become *Land-richter*, (provincial judge;) *President* (of a local court of law, or of a provincial

* In some parts of Germany the political opinions of the aspirant are also severely tested.

government;) *Regierungs-rath*, (town councillor;) *Geheim-rath*, (privy councillor;) *Geheim-ober-justiz-rath*, (supreme privy councillor of justice;) *Staats-rath*, (councillor of state;) and at last, *Staats-minister*, (minister of state,) &c. I give here but a few samples out of the countless number of official titles in Germany, some of which are of enormous length. In Prussia or Saxony, powerful interest may push forward a young man who has given proof of talent and application; but I never heard that any patronage could avail much in behalf of incapacity. These governments seem to be aware that it is their interest to be well served in every department. Every young man must work his way upwards, and literally *work hard*. The pay is small in comparison with the same official rank in England; the competition very great, there being always many hundred more aspirants than the government can possibly employ. There is also a law by which no young man can marry until he is promoted to a salaried office, (*angestellt*,) or can prove that his private fortune is adequate to the support of a wife and family.

Another point requiring some farther explanation is the ceremony of betrothing, (Verlobung,) previous to the solemnization of a marriage. It has been frequently alluded to in the former dramas, but as it forms a principal incident in the plot of the YOUNG WARD, I have reserved till now what I had to remark on the subject.

The "Verlobung," or betrothing, is often, but not always, a solemn ceremony. "Sich verloben" means, generally, that in answer to formal proposals the lover is formally accepted by the lady or her family; then, if there be no reason for keeping the affair a secret, the relations and intimate friends on both sides are assembled, and the young people are presented as "verlobt," (i.e. affianced). Sometimes an exchange of rings takes place in token of this engagement: I frequently met young ladies in company who wore the "Verlobungs-ring." The couple thus affianced are henceforth "Braut and Brautigam," (i. e. bride and bridegroom, which exactly answers to the French *fiancé*, *fiancée*); and visits

are paid in society with the two names printed on the same card—or it is announced to all whom it may concern in the public papers, and congratulatory visits are paid in return. If the parties are noble, they are presented together at court as "verlobte:" these ceremonies vary little in the different states of Germany.

The custom of betrothing has, like all human institutions, its advantages and disadvantages. As a considerable time must often elapse before the gentleman is in a position to marry, it is an advantage that the intimacy between the engaged parties should not be subject to misapprehension, and the lady's reputation suffer from the gentleman's assiduities: that she should not be exposed to the attentions of other men, nor they to the mistake of falling in love with her. It is also an advantage that this facility of intercourse enables persons to judge more truly of each other; to see more clearly what chance of happiness they may have in each other's society before they are linked together by a more sacred tie; for it not unfrequently happens that this better knowledge of each other leads to the cancelling of the engagement ere it be too late. On the other hand, when this intercourse lasts too long, it sometimes has evil consequences; not only in the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick, but others more fatal still. Then, as the bridegroom is expected to devote every leisure moment to the society of his betrothed, as he attends her to all public places and to every party, (for it is not considered good manners to invite them separately;) as they are invariably seated next to each other, they have time to become tolerably tired of each other's society before marriage, and have nothing left to say. As little restraint is placed on their intercourse, and as it is the gentleman's duty to be very much in love, he is sometimes reduced to the dilemma so humorously stated by Rosalind, "gravelled for lack of matter"—*etcetera—etcetera*. In fact, the display of tenderness is such now and then, even in a room full of people, as to make the rest of the company look rather foolish and feel themselves rather *de trop*. Perpetual and devoted attention on the gentleman's part, during this interval, be it longer or shorter, is a thing of

course, not to be dispensed with; hence it will sometimes happen that the poor *fiancé* is glad to be relieved at last from this display of *tenderness obligato* by the rites of marriage. A neglect of all little graceful attentions immediately ensues, to the utter consternation of the poor wife, who is apt to mistake for a change of feeling what is only a change of manner.

Notwithstanding these remarks, I should say, that considering the peculiar constitution of German society, the advantages of the custom far exceed its disadvantages. It appears to me that a familiar and confidential intercourse, when not too long protracted, increases the chance of eventual happiness to both parties, and is, on the whole, particularly favourable to the woman.

The character of the Countess in this play is very exquisitely drawn and very highly finished. The tranquil grace, the suavity yet decision of manner, the tenderness and elevation of sentiment, in this most beautiful delineation of the high-born and high-bred German lady, require the powers of a first-rate actress. I have seen it admirably performed by Mademoiselle Lindner of Frankfort. The scene in which the Countess, incredulous of her conquest over the heart of a man so much younger than herself, steps up to her mirror, gazes for a moment on her own beautiful face, then turns away with a half conscious smile—gratified vanity and the feelings of the woman contending, but only for one instant, with reason and modesty—was one of the prettiest and most delicate, as well as most *effective* points I ever saw on the stage. Mademoiselle Hagen at Berlin, Mademoiselle Bauer at Dresden, Mademoiselle Müller at Vienna, and the charming Lortzing at Weimar, have all lent additional celebrity to this character by their finished impersonation of it. We are wofully deficient in ladies and gentlemen, or rather in the representatives of such, on the English stage: I know not one actress, except it be Ellen Tree, to whom such a part as the Countess Werdenbach could be trusted. The approved heroines of our comic drama are romps in comparison: but the whole play is perhaps too essentially German

in character and costume, to be relished or comprehended by an English audience—at least in its present form.

Ida, being noble, is *Fräulein*, which, for the reasons already given, I translate by *Lady* Ida. Hallerfeld is an admirable picture of a pssionate, romantic boy: of the characters of Grünau and old Salome it is not necessary to speak;—they speak for themselves.

The scene we may imagine somewhere, in the environs of Dresden—at one of those beautiful villas or Weinbergs (such as Weistrop, for instance,) scattered along the banks of the Elbe. It is clear from the allusions throughout the play, that this locality was in the fancy, probably before the eyes, of the authoress when she wrote. Pillnitz, the country palace of the Saxon royal family, and a favourite summer residence of the Princess Amelia, is thus situated.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

COUNTESS EMILIE VON WERDENBECH, *A widow.*
IDA VON GRÜNAU, *Her niece.*
BARON VON GRÜNAU, *Brother-in-law to the Countess.*
BARON ROBERT VON HALLERFELD.
COUNT VON BIBERECK.
SALOME, *Ida's nurse.*

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, PEASANTS.

The scene during the two first acts is at a country-house belonging to the Countess; during the two last acts in the same place, but two years later.

THE YOUNG WARD.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A drawing-room—with a piano on one side, a Psyche mirror and work-table on the other.*

IDA—SALOME.*

SALOME.

As I have been telling you, my dear young

* Throughout the play Ida addresses her nurse with the tender and familiar Du; while Salome uses towards her charge, young as she is, the respectful third person plural, Sie. It is quite impossible to give in English all the nice shades of sentiment expressed in German by the distinction in the use of pronouns.

lady, we shall see a wonderful change here before the year's out—a wonderful change!

IDA.

I do not understand you.

SALOME.

Don't you remember last St. Andrew's Eve, when we two and little Malchen* Bohring threw our shoes behind us? my shoe fell with the heel to the door, and so did Malchen's, as was very natural, seeing that she is twelve years old, and I sixty—both of us of an age at which one does not usually think of marrying; but your shoe flew off nimbly, just with the toe to the door-step, as who should say, "Make way! let me out!"

IDA.

Salome, pray leave off!—my aunt has forbidden me for the future to play such foolish tricks. She calls it all superstition and nonsense.

SALOME.

Marry! your lady aunt is a learned lady, who despises everything which she doesn't understand as well as her multiplication table. O, I'm sure I wouldn't take upon me to dispute with your aunt: she knows everything best—to be sure!

* Malchen is the German diminutive of Amalie (*i. e.* Amelia).

IDA.

She is all that is excellent, and means everything for my good: of that I feel sure.

SALOME.

Ay, best you should think so, since, alack-a-day! you are under her protection.

IDA.

And am content to be so.

SALOME.

So am not I; and I can't forgive it to your papa—God rest his soul!—that he should have placed you under the orders of this fine lady aunt: and what for? why, to finish your education, forsooth! as if you were not educated already!

IDA.

O, I know too well my own deficiencies!

SALOME.

And for all the world what are they? can't you read, and write, and cipher? can't you knit and sew? and can't you play on the piano? and can't you speak French?*

IDA.

Ah, Salome, one must know a great deal more.

* It is perhaps lucky, both for Germany and England, that Salome's idea of a perfect education is not quite so universal as formerly.

SALOME.

What should you know more? The young Countess Marburg did not know half so much when Count von Thurnfeld married her.

IDA.

She is not happy; and my aunt thinks the reason is, that she married too young.

SALOME.

Ay, ay,—

> "Early wooed, and early won,
> Was never repented under the sun;"

but I know—I know why my lady aunt talks so; —well, sure, I mean no disrespect!

IDA.

Nor will I suffer it.

SALOME.

Be content—I am blind, deaf, and dumb;—and indeed, since I have been in this house, I have almost forgotten the use of my own faculties: but there is your uncle—*he* won't let himself be reasoned out of his senses; he will stand up for your rights in spite of yourself.

IDA.

My uncle!

SALOME.

A respectable old gentleman!—and if the dear

deceased had left *him* your guardian, things had gone on better than they do now.

IDA.

Yet my uncle has not half the understanding of my aunt.

SALOME.

Understanding! and pray where's the use of understanding? the world would have gone to destruction long ago, if, luckily, there were not some people in it who have no understanding to boast of.

IDA.

That's a strange fancy.

SALOME.

Not so strange as it sounds. You will soon be sixteen, and a most charming young lady you are: now a person without understanding would introduce you into company.

IDA (*sighing*).

I should like that very well, now and then.

SALOME.

And if a charming young gentleman—a pretty young gentleman—should come a visiting—not without some thoughts in his head, I warrant me—why, perhaps, a person without understanding might think of marrying you to him!

IDA (*frightened.*)

Marrying me?—Salome!

SALOME.

Well, and what then—you like this young Hallerfeld, I fancy?

IDA.

Why, yes, he is so very good-natured!

SALOME.

And he likes you.

IDA.

He is always so kind to me—as if—as if he were my own brother.

SALOME.

Brother indeed! brothers are very agreeable as long as one plays at shuttlecock and blind-man's buff; but at sixteen a young lady doesn't want a brother, but a sweetheart, that *miss* may become *my lady* in no time.* O how I will dance at your wedding! I shall go and live with *you* then—shall I not?

IDA.

So you shall, dear Salome!

SALOME.

Do you know that Hallerfeld has the bunch of violets you gave him yesterday, in the garden, stuck in his waistcoat button-hole this morning?

IDA.

Indeed!

* Damit man das Fraülein bald gnädige Frau heissen könne!

SALOME.

And every day he visits the flowers that you have watched through the winter for your aunt; and he waters them with his own hand.

IDA.

Ah! they are not worth it!

SALOME.

And the linnet's nest which Gottlob* brought you two days ago; it was he who climbed for it, at the risk of his life;—ay, he! Gottlob would never have ventured so high.

IDA.

If I had thought that, I would never, never have longed for that luckless nest!

SALOME.

Well, and do you make nothing out of that?

IDA.

If ever he were to be unhappy—for my sake!

SALOME.

Ay—now's your time; enjoy it! Twenty years hence nobody will make themselves miserable about you!

IDA.

How do you mean?

* Gottlob, and Gottlieb, (*Praise-God*, and *Love-God*,) are not uncommon baptismal names in Germany.

SALOME.

For no one will fall in love with you *then*, you know!

IDA (*frightened*).

In love—how can you, Salome, talk so!

SALOME.

I say in love—young Hállerfeld is in love with you; and that's why he hangs his head, and walks up and down the garden, and clambers up trees.

IDA.

I ought not to listen to you when you speak of such things.

SALOME.

Why not? the young gentleman is of your own rank—has a good fortune—is of age: so you may love him in all honour, and they who say the contrary, say wrong—and have their own views in it.

IDA.

What views?

SALOME.

O, all is not gold that glitters! Envy—envy, my dear young lady, is a vice that can hide itself under the mask of all manner of virtues; and of all things I do mortally hate your widows! they have, after their husbands' death, as it were, a

second youth, and usurp the rights of the next generation.

Enter HALLERFELD.

HALLERFELD.

Good morning, Lady Ida; may I inquire where your aunt is?

IDA.

She is writing; but I think she will be here immediately, for she has not yet breakfasted.

HALLERFELD.

With your permission, I will wait for her here.

IDA.

Surely it will be for me an honour—a pleasure.

SALOME.

I had clean forgotten the breakfast. I must go see if the rolls have come from town yet.

IDA (*in a low voice*).

Salome, do not leave me alone.

SALOME.

Don't be so bashful, but entertain your guest.

[*Exit*.

HALLERFELD.

Pray do not disturb yourself on my account; just do as if I were not here.

IDA (*goes slowly to her embroidery frame, and seats herself*).

Will you not take a chair?

HALLERFELD, (*he seats himself on the opposite side, and sighs deeply*).

Heigh-ho!

IDA.

You sigh?

HALLERFELD.

Does that never happen to you?

IDA.

Perhaps it does—sometimes.

HALLERFELD.

When your master has made the lesson too long? (*Pause. Ida remains silent.*) Or when the dressmaker has not brought home your new gown when promised—eh?

IDA.

I am no longer a child, Baron von Hallerfeld!

HALLERFELD.

No? I should be sorry for you if that were true. Only as children are we happy! Has Gottlob brought you the linnet's nest for which you wished so much?

IDA.

Yes, he has—and there are four young ones in

it; one of them is a little drooping, but I hope to bring him up with the rest.

HALLERFELD.

That's well.

IDA.

And I know to whom alone I am indebted for the pleasure it has given me!

HALLERFELD.

Indeed!

IDA.

You risked your life for me!

HALLERFELD.

Not at all; one who has been five years practising gymnastics, can climb a tree without risk of his life.

IDA.

You would detract from your own merit.

HALLERFELD.

O no indeed!—for I would have brought it from the top of the steeple, if I had thought its possession could make you happy.

IDA.

You are really too good.

HALLERFELD.

There is but one period in our life when happiness can be brought from a tree-top, or purchased with a dollar, and therefore woe to those who refuse anything to that happy age!

IDA.

You say that in such a solemn tone!

HALLERFELD (*sighing*).

Never mind my solemn tone.

IDA.

You look sad too.

HALLERFELD.

My days of mirth are long past.

IDA.

Soh? I did not know—pray pardon me—that any misfortune had befallen you?

HALLERFELD.

Be glad then—that you know it not.

IDA.

You are not ill?

HALLERFELD.

I am quite well;—you are acquainted, it seems, with no other suffering but sickness.

IDA.

I lost my father only a year ago. O, I often weep even now when I think of him!

HALLERFELD.

My parents died so young that, I may say, I have never known them.

IDA.

That is very sad!

HALLERFELD.

And now who is there to love me?

IDA.

O, if that were all, I know some one who loves you dearly.

HALLERFELD (*eagerly*).

Indeed—and that is——

IDA.

My uncle Grünau.

HALLERFELD.

He?—O!—

IDA.

And if you liked, he would be to you a father.

HALLERFELD (*dryly*).

Exceedingly obliged; but without a father I shall endeavour to manage my own affairs.

IDA (*aside*).

Poor young man!—how sorry I am for him! Ah, if I were but a little older, perhaps he would tell me why he grieves—and I might comfort him, or at least weep with him:—weep! yes, there are moments when even to weep is not unpleasing.

[*She leans over her frame and goes on working, while Hallerfeld sits on the opposite side, turning over books and newspapers.*

Enter BARON VON GRÜNAU.

GRÜNAU.

I find you at last, my dear niece!

IDA (*springing up*).

O my dear uncle! this is delightful!—we did not expect you till to-morrow.

GRÜNAU.

Why, I finished all my business yesterday evening; saw the sun shining gloriously in at my window this morning; and, thinks I, why should I put off till to-morrow a pleasure I can have to-day?—so the horses were ordered, and here I am.

HALLERFELD.

Herr von Grünau! most happy to see you.

GRÜNAU (*smiling*).

You here—ha, ha! charming! I find my niece in excellent company; very right—very proper—sorry to have disturbed you.

HALLERFELD.

If you will allow me, I will announce your arrival to the Countess.

GRÜNAU.

Been with her—spoken to her already: I am now Ida's and yours—don't you know that it is a month since we saw each other—eh?

HALLERFELD.

Very true.

GRÜNAU.

You are looking quite well and gay.

HALLERFELD.

That is more than I knew.

GRÜNAU.

You like being in the country, here—eh?

HALLERFELD (*with emphasis*).

I would it could last for ever!

GRÜNAU.

Why, no one is going to drive you away. The countess has hitherto shown you all kindness—and Ida—(*looking at her*)—why, girl, what has come to you? you are half a head taller than you were a month ago! and your countenance has an expression and intelligence I never remarked before! (*to Hallerfeld*) Don't you think so?

HALLERFELD (*absently*).

O yes—certainly.

GRÜNAU (*to Ida*).

I have not yet thanked you for the present you sent me on my birthday; the most beautiful purse—I have it always in my pocket—(*takes it out and shows it to Hallerfeld*)—there—see how beautifully she works!

HALLERFELD (*politely*).

Beautifully indeed.

GRÜNAU.

And then she speaks such French! and—have you heard her sing?

IDA (*bashfully*).

Uncle!

HALLERFELD.

I have not yet had that pleasure.

GRÜNAU.

O you *must* hear her sing—and here's the piano——

IDA (*aside to him*).

My dear uncle! pray—I cannot—indeed I cannot——

GRÜNAU.

You will not make affected excuses only among ourselves?

HALLERFELD.

The young lady is really agitated—do not mind it.

IDA.

And I really am a little hoarse.

HALLERFELD.

She *is* hoarse.

GRÜNAU.

Hoarse! why just now she spoke very distinctly: I'll have no excuses. An old uncle is not to be put off like a young lover. (*Opens the piano.*) Ida! sit down. (*She hesitates.*) Sit down, I say, or I shall be angry.

[*Ida, frightened, sits down hurriedly before the piano.*

GRÜNAU (*turns over the music and takes up a piece*).

" *Freudvoll und leidvoll, Gedankenvoll seyn,*" out of Egmont.* (*To Hallerfeld.*) You know it?

HALLERFELD.

A charming song!

GRÜNAU.

Is it not? I made her sing it to me every day in town, till I was, as it were, quite melted—dissolved. (*To Ida.*) Now collect yourself;—and you—(*to Hallerfeld*)—attend.

[*Ida sings, at first with a trembling voice, but gaining courage as she proceeds.*

GRÜNAU (*interrupting her from time to time.*)

Bravo! delicious!† bravissimo!

[*Hallerfield stands lost in thought, and then*

* This is the celebrated song of Clärchen in Egmont:

Freudvoll, und leidvoll
Gedankenvoll seyn;
Langen und bangen
In schwebender Pein;
Himmelhoch jauchzend, zum Tode betrübt;
Glücklich allein ist die Seele die liebt!

" To be joyful, to be sorrowful, to be thoughtful;—to long, to pine in doubtful misery;—exulting high as heaven,—mournful even to death,—happy alone is the soul that loves!"

This exquisite song has been set to music many times: but the elaborate composition of Beethoven, though very fine, strikes me as far less in character with the singer Clärchen, than the simple ballad air of Reichard, which is always sung on the stage by Ida.

† The uncle adds Zum Küssen! which is untranslateable.

turns away with emotion, and tears in his eyes.

Enter the COUNTESS.

[*She appears at the door, and stands there for a few moments unperceived by the others.*

GRÜNAU (*after the song is ended*).

Bravo! bravissimo! (*Wipes his eyes.*) Now what do you say to that?

HALLERFELD (*startled*).

I?

GRÜNAU.

Yes—what do you say to that—eh?

HALLERFELD.

Pardon my abstraction, those heavenly words of Goethe——

GRÜNAU.

You are quite affected, I see; and hasn't my niece, now, a charming voice?

HALLERFELD.

Very charming indeed!

GRÜNAU.

Ay, and she sings Rossini's things, and goes as high as B.

HALLERFELD (*humming the song abstractedly*).

"Happy alone the soul that loves!"

(*Sighing*)—Ah! most true!

THE COUNTESS (*coming forward with a smile*).

Ha! I think we are all in the sentimental way here!

HALLERFELD.

Do I see you at last, my dear madam? I have already sought you in your flower-garden, but could not find you there: then I ventured to your ante-chamber, for I feared you were unwell, but they told me you were only occupied.

GRÜNAU.

Ida has just been singing for Baron von Hallerfeld the song out of Egmont.

COUNTESS.

I heard it.

GRÜNAU.

My young friend seems in love with the pathetic, so our little Malibran here shall give him Thekla's song out of Wallenstein and the Ritter Toggenberg,* in her best style.

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

That would be rather too much of a good

* The allusion is to the song in Schiller's tragedy of Wallenstein—

The cloud doth gather, the greenwood roar,
The damsel paceth along the shore, &c.

translated by Coleridge, by Charles Lamb, and others.

The Ritter Toggenberg (Roland the brave) is one of Schiller's most popular ballads; both have been set to music many times and with various success.

thing. Robert, here is a note for you from Baron Weiler—he is hunting here in the neighbourhood—an invitation probably——

HALLERFELD.

Which I shall decline.

COUNTESS.

And why decline it? You had once a passion for hunting.

HALLERFELD.

I had—but hunting, like everything else in the world, has ceased to interest me.

COUNTESS.

That is not well in a young man of your age.

HALLERFELD (*sighing*).

A little touch of hypochondria.

GRÜNAU.

Eh? my good young friend?—no hunting?—no company?—and the song out of Egmont?—there must be something in all that—eh?

HALLERFELD.

Nothing in the world.

COUNTESS.

How have you been employed this morning?

HALLERFELD.

Reading—writing—working hard; your ladyship has reason to be satisfied with me.

COUNTESS.

I am glad to hear it.*

HALLERFELD.

O, I am now very industrious, and will do all that depends on myself to become a practical man of business, though I am afraid I shall never quite succeed.

COUNTESS.

And why so?

HALLERFELD.

Because I want that energy without which no man can attain any high object.

COUNTESS.

Remember that to the young the whole world lies open before them.

HALLERFELD (*sighs*).

The world has no charms for me.

COUNTESS.

You will change your mind on that point—too soon, perhaps.

GRÜNAU.

Who knows—eh? perhaps we have a certain expedient to restore you; and if that be the case, speak out freely—you know we are your best friends.

COUNTESS (*during this last speech she turns away, and walks to the window.*)

A lovely day!

* Ist mir lieb. This is just the Italian phrase "*avere a caro.*"

HALLERFELD (*follows her, anxious to change the conversation*).

Rather warm!

COUNTESS.

I think I should like to draw a little; will you bring me a bouquet from the garden? You understand how to arrange flowers picturesquely.

HALLERFELD.

Do you think so? I fly! and only regret at this moment that I am not a Persian.

COUNTESS.

And why?

HALLERFELD.

That I might make my bouquet as significant as I could wish.

GRÜNAU.

Ay!—perhaps now an honest German might read in your eyes what your flowers would fail to express?

HALLERFELD.

Perhaps so;—perhaps not. [*Exit.*

GRÜNAU.

A very fine young man that—eh?

COUNTESS.

Yes, he improves——

GRÜNAU.

Who would not wish to keep him when they had him must be out of their senses;—now, Ida is he not charming?

IDA (*blushing*).

Very—agreeable.

GRÜNAU.

And good-natured—eh?

IDA.

Surely.

GRÜNAU.

And amiable to boot? I could have kissed you for singing that song so divinely!—big tears were in his eyes.

IDA.

Did I not sing out of tune once or twice?

COUNTESS.

You did, my child: nor was Hallerfeld's emotion caused by your singing; and if your uncle will follow my advice, he will for the future spare you the embarrassment of making an exhibition of talents as yet imperfect. Go now into the drawing-room: I have a few words to say to your uncle. [*Ida leaves the room.*

GRÜNAU.

What are your commands?

COUNTESS.

I must beg of you, as friend and kinsman, not to disturb the tranquil purity of a still childish heart.

GRÜNAU.

Eh?—how?

COUNTESS.

Nor put such ideas into your niece's head as ought long to remain strangers to her mind.

GRÜNAU.

I do not understand your ladyship.

COUNTESS.

Then I must speak more plainly; what do you mean with regard to Ida and this young Hallerfeld?

GRÜNAU.

I mean that she shall marry him.

COUNTESS.

Marry him!

GRÜNAU.

Yes, marry him; he is rich—an equal and excellent match for her. Do you intend to keep your niece in the house till a prince comes to pay his addresses to her—eh?

COUNTESS.

Hallerfeld has paid no addresses.

GRÜNAU.

He will, as soon as you please.

COUNTESS.

I doubt it much.

GRÜNAU.

He has a great veneration for *you*.

COUNTESS.

He has a grateful disposition, and is, on the whole, an excellent youth, who, with good management, may become a distinguished man.

GRÜNAU.

Which management, as it seems, your ladyship has undertaken?

COUNTESS.

I do my best to fulfil the last wishes of a man who once secured my happiness at the expense of his own.

GRÜNAU.

You mean his father, the late Baron? he was formerly in love with you, was he not?

COUNTESS.

He was: and my parents had promised my hand to him. It depended on himself to become my husband, for I *must* have obeyed;—but he discovered that my heart belonged to my late dear Werdenbach, and, notwithstanding his passion for me, he not only resigned all pretensions to my hand, but succeeded in removing the obstacles which separated me from the man I loved—nay, never rested till he saw us united.

GRÜNAU.

I call that nobly done, faith!

COUNTESS.

He was a widower when he sought my hand,

and did not afterwards marry. On his deathbed he sent for me, and commended to my care his son, then eight years old. "I leave this poor boy alone in the world," said he; "be to him a mother, a guardian angel, when I am no more;" and weeping, I promised him to watch with my best powers over the welfare of his son—and have, up to this moment, fulfilled my vow.

GRÜNAU (*with a half sneer*).

Even envy cannot deny that.

COUNTESS.

As soon as I returned to this country, after my husband's death, I inquired after Robert, and assumed the rights of an old friend. I found him as yet unspoiled, but wavering in his principles, surrounded by flatterers and light companions, and averse from every serious occupation. To fix his mind on what was really worthy—to win him from his false friends—to rouse him to active exertion, was then my first endeavour, and thank heaven! it was not all in vain; for the confidence he placed in me from the first moment rendered it easy for me to obtain some influence over him.

GRÜNAU.

And to secure this influence, the best thing you can do now is to make him your nephew.

COUNTESS.

That will not answer at all.

GRÜNAU.

Why not?

COUNTESS.

Ida is yet but a child.

GRÜNAU.

A child of sixteen.

COUNTESS.

Her early education was much neglected.

GRÜNAU.

A good husband will finish her education.

COUNTESS.

How *can* he,—who is scarcely more than a child himself? My dear Baron, let us not arbitrarily intermeddle with the fate of these young people. To unite them now at their age, with their present feelings, were to render them really unhappy: besides, Robert does not love Ida.

GRÜNAU.

I should rather presume that he does. Don't you observe how he wanders about like a lunatic? and the servants aver that he has been seen listening to the nightingales, and peeping into churchyards.

COUNTESS.

That he has been lately occupied by some romantic feeling — *that* I have observed; but, believe me, Ida is not the object who has excited this feeling.

GRÜNAU.

Who can it be else? .

COUNTESS.

That I do not know, and it distresses me.

GRÜNAU.

Say what you will, I think as I did.

COUNTESS.

Then I am placed under the necessity of sending Ida at once from home.

GRÜNAU.

How!—madam!

COUNTESS.

I cannot have this dear good girl cheated of the innocent happiness of her young years; and therefore shall send her for a twelvemonth to Madame de Braun, with whom I have already had some conference on the subject.

GRÜNAU.

Send her to a boarding-school!

COUNTESS.

To an excellent school, in which Ida will have better opportunities of cultivating her natural talents than any she can find here in the country.

GRÜNAU (*vehemently*).

You will not do it—must not—I am the girl's uncle——

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

Even for that reason!—*I* cannot well shut the

door against the uncle who persists in turning his poor little niece's head; but it would be allowable in a preceptress. Do not be angry, my good Baron, I mean no offence. I will send Salome to show you to your room. (*Aside as she goes out.*) Really folly often works more mischief in the world than wickedness itself!

[*Exit.*

GRÜNAU.

A strange woman! I never could abide her; but she has a way of dressing up nonsense in fine words till it almost sounds like sense. If I only knew what sets her so against this marriage with Hallerfeld!—there must be something behind it all which I don't yet see.

Enter SALOME.

SALOME.

Are you arrived at last, my Lord Baron?

GRÜNAU.

Good morning, Mamsell Salome; how is it with your sprained foot?

SALOME.

All well—all forgotten—now that I see your lordship again—our papa—our comforter—our protector! Ah, how I have longed for your arrival!

GRÜNAU.

How have you been going on, then, for the last month—eh?

SALOME.

Wretchedly! I have well-nigh fretted myself into a consumption!

GRÜNAU.

Ay, indeed!—how so?

SALOME.

To be regarded no more than the fifth wheel to a cart—that I could endure—but my poor young lady!

GRÜNAU.

My niece?

SALOME.

My lady here does so tyrannise over her!

GRÜNAU.

Ida?

SALOME.

Every morning we are dragged out of bed by seven o'clock.

GRÜNAU.

Why—as to that——

SALOME.

And then we must go out a walking. My young lady has already caught cold once with these fine morning walks; and then at dinner

they talk learned languages—English or Russian—I can never understand a word;* and in the evening one must read fine-flown books about dead kings and queens, and such like; and what's more, the poor dear darling can never do anything right in my lady aunt's opinion; her embroidery is old fashioned—and her playing on the music, that used to enchant all the country people at the old castle,—to be sure its just nothing at all: in short, it's all finding fault from morn to night, when I'm sure my lady ought to be too happy to have such a sweet creature in her family. *You*, my lord, would have known better how to value such a jewel: her deceased father should have confided his daughter to you.

GRÜNAU.

I should have had no objection: the girl's rich: I would have taken her home willingly.

SALOME.

The poor dear child bears everything with the patience of an angel, and never complains: but she frets inwardly, and has quite fallen away.

GRÜNAU.

I didn't remark that she had grown thin.

* It would be quite consistent with German manners that Salome, Ida's *Bonne*, should, in the country at least, dine at the same table with her young charge and the Countess-aunt.

SALOME.

You are her uncle: don't you think you could contrive to get us out of this house?

GRÜNAU.

That is likely to happen without my interference: the Countess means to send Ida to school.

SALOME.

To school?—such a tall young lady!

GRÜNAU.

For about a year.

SALOME.

See now—what wickedness! She does it for nothing but to break off this marriage with young Baron Hallerfeld.

GRÜNAU.

It almost seems so.

SALOME.

But, my lord, you must not suffer it!

GRÜNAU.

And what can I do? The Countess has on her side my brother's will, and the law besides.

SALOME.

Such laws haven't a bit of sense in them.

GRÜNAU.

If I only knew why the woman won't have the Baron von Hallerfeld for a nephew!—

SALOME.

That *I* can tell you.

GRÜNAU.

So!

SALOME.

But you won't betray me?

GRÜNAU.

Not for the world.

SALOME.

Why, then—because she would rather have him for a husband herself!

GRÜNAU (*staring with the utmost astonishment*).

Mamsell—Salome!

SALOME.

Believe me, my lord, or believe me not—it lies in your choice; but I will stick to it in life and death—so it is, and no otherwise.

GRÜNAU.

There you may be mistaken. I was talking before you came for an hour together with the Countess; she explained to me the reasons of her interest about young Hallerfeld, and made a long story about it all.*

SALOME.

The only true reason is, that she's in love with the young man herself.

GRÜNAU.

If it be so, it's abominable!

* The idiom is, "Und eine recht lange Brühe darüber gemacht."

SALOME.

Ay, trust an experienced person, one who can tell you a word or two of the tricks of them widows. I was once going to be married when I was young; I only waited the moment when my sweetheart* would propose, and then there comes a widow, and fishes him away from me!

GRÜNAU (*without attending to her*).

I *will* know the truth.

SALOME (*wiping her eyes*).

He was in the army——

GRÜNAU.

Who?

SALOME.

My old love.

GRÜNAU.

Who is talking of your loves? They belong by this time to the province of history. Leave me alone, pray, for I think I hear Hallerfeld.

SALOME.

I'm gone. (*Going, returns.*) Ah, my lord, if you can only bring him to propose for my young lady, I'll dance with you at the wedding! [*Exit.*

GRÜNAU.

A tempting bribe, truly! (*Hallerfeld is heard behind the scenes, singing the song in Egmont.*) 'Tis

* Der Herzleibste. The German language is peculiarly rich in words which express the affectionate relations of social life.

he—and still in the clouds, it seems. If I could only get him so deep in his romance that he could not get out of it in a hurry.

Enter HALLERFELD.

HALLERFELD (*with a bouquet in his hand, and singing*).

"Happy alone the soul that loves!"

GRÜNAU.

Ay—there's reason in that.

HALLERFELD (*starting as he observes him*).

In what?

GRÜNAU.

In what the song says.

HALLERFELD.

I cannot get that air out of my head.

GRÜNAU.

Nor the words more particularly—eh? Where are you going?

HALLERFELD.

To the Countess, to take her these flowers.

GRÜNAU.

Time enough for that—at present I want to talk to you.

HALLERFELD.

In what can I serve you?

GRÜNAU.

Serve *me?*—my good young friend, it is I who

would serve *you*. There, lay the flowers down—(*Takes the bouquet from him.*) Do you know that your melancholy and dejection go to my very heart?

HALLERFELD.

My natural temperament.

GRÜNAU.

Pah!—at twenty, well looking, and with a hundred thousand dollars of your own—nonsense—don't talk to me of a melancholy temperament!

HALLERFELD.

Think of me what you will—(*going.*)

GRÜNAU.

Well, but stay: you are like quicksilver—(*holding him*); you have some secret sorrow now—eh?

HALLERFELD.

If it be secret, 'tis a sign that I wish to confide it to nobody.

GRÜNAU.

You are in love!

HALLERFELD.

Baron von Grünau!

GRÜNAU.

Don't be angry—I'm here on purpose to help you.

HALLERFELD.

Allow me to go.

GRÜNAU.

No—no—listen to me, and don't be childish. Why should you be ashamed of it? the person you love is free.

HALLERFELD.

And who told you I was in love?

GRÜNAU (*looking at him*).

Your face.

HALLERFELD.

And if I say my face lies?

GRÜNAU.

Excuse me, but in that case the falsehood would be yours; therefore, to talk reason, the person you love is free, and not far off. (*Robert is struck silent.*) Well, now, why should you blush?

HALLERFELD (*after a pause*).

Whatever you may suppose, sir, I hope at least you will have the delicacy to be silent.

GRÜNAU.

And how are we to bring matters to a happy termination, if no one is to open his mouth?

HALLERFELD.

Who talks of a happy termination?

GRÜNAU.

Why, *I* do.

HALLERFELD.

Not to be banished from her presence is all I dare aspire to!

GRÜNAU.

Banished!

HALLERFELD.

It might be so, if I dared to declare myself, and therefore have I vowed an eternal silence—therefore do I conjure you to guard for ever that secret which you have so incomprehensibly discovered.

GRÜNAU.

It is true, then, what I would not allow myself to believe?—you were afraid, eh?—jealousy, eh? O this jealousy is a vile thing!

HALLERFELD.

I do not comprehend a word.

GRÜNAU.

O Salome—Salome!

HALLERFELD.

What do you want with the old woman?

GRÜNAU.

She has seen it all—she is a deep one: but you shall not be cheated of your happiness, so make yourself easy. I will play the uncle's part here. I will move heaven and earth. [*Going.*

HALLERFELD (*holding him*).

Will you ruin me?

GRÜNAU.

Let me go. I will, if it be necessary, invoke the protection of the laws.

HALLERFELD.

Are you out of your senses?

GRÜNAU.

Let me go, I say; the consent of the Countess must and shall be gained.

HALLERFELD.

Consider what you are saying——

GRÜNAU.

No consideration necessary; we will try fair means first, but if that fail, *fiat justitia, et pereat mundus!* So farewell, my dear nephew.

HALLERFELD.

Nephew!

GRÜNAU.

My nephew, when you marry Ida.

HALLERFELD (*transfixed with amazement*).

Ida! O heavens!

GRÜNAU.

I will go to her, and prepare her for your proposal—is not that what you wish?

HALLERFELD.

I wish? I—I really know not, Baron, what I can say to you.

GRÜNAU.

Say nothing then. [*Going.*

HALLERFELD (*detains him*).

Do not be in such a hurry.

GRÜNAU.

Young sir, I really have no time for long ceremonies, for to-morrow I return to town.

HALLERFELD.

Then am I forced, without any preparation, to tell you, that—you have entirely misunderstood me!

GRÜNAU.

How? what?

HALLERFELD.

And that it never entered into my head to be in love with your niece.

GRÜNAU.

Are you in jest?

HALLERFELD.

In most serious earnest.

GRÜNAU.

So much the worse.

HALLERFELD.

I thought it my duty to prevent you, by an honest explanation, from taking a step so disagreeable to all parties.

GRÜNAU.

Explanation! — Gentlemen think to make everything wrong, right, by *explaining*, as they call it: and pray, sir, if you do not love my niece, why have you been talking with her—laughing

with her—crying over songs, and climbing trees for birds' nests? Yes, sir, I am informed of all, and I demand satisfaction, Sir!

HALLERFELD.

You rave!

GRÜNAU (*without listening to him*).

And why did you tell me, yourself, just now, when I spoke of some secret grief, and of the object that here, even here—hard by—why there's no one except my niece——(*strikes his forehead, as if seized with a sudden thought*)—why, bless my soul! and you are alarmed, you are—stand still; don't go—now I see it all! O Salome, Salome!

HALLERFELD.

Salome again!

GRÜNAU.

No, I shall never recover it!—I'm a dead man!*

HALLERFELD.

Only say what is the matter?

GRÜNAU.

To be such a fool, young man, so stone blind, as to let yourself be caught by an old coquette! Isn't it enough to drive one distracted?

* Das fehlte mir noch! Das ist mein Letztes! is the peculiar German idiom.

HALLERFELD (*sternly*).

Who do you mean, sir, by an old coquette?

GRÜNAU.

Why, this Countess—who is not ashamed, at her age, to steal her niece's lovers away!

HALLERFELD.

No more, sir! your sixty years restrain my arm, or, assuredly, you should not unchastised dare to slander a woman worthy of the deepest veneration.

GRÜNAU (*sneeringly*).

And the tenderest love.

HALLERFELD (*passionately*).

And the tenderest love! Why not? I care not if I proclaim to the whole world a feeling which I have hitherto concealed from timidity—not from shame. I do love her—that noblest, most excellent of women! 'tis a love, at once my happiness and my pride! Let others be caught by the trifling of your mere girls; I am to be captivated only by that beauty which beams with all the lustre of approved virtue.

GRÜNAU (*scornfully*).

Well, go to her—you had better—and offer her marriage.

HALLERFELD.

I have not yet had the courage to betray my

feelings by a single word—but you are going the right way to give me this courage, and who knows to what rashness I may be tempted within the next hour!

GRÜNAU (*vehemently*).

Do what you like—I'm not your guardian, and have no power to hinder you; but speak I can and will; the whole world shall know what to think of you and of that old *intriguante*, to whom a deceived father entrusted the care of his child: yes, it shall!

HALLERFELD.

You presume too far on the forbearance due to your years—but do not try me beyond endurance: in me she has at least a kinsman, a pupil, a friend: and I swear that if you allow yourself to utter another offensive word against the Countess, I will assume my rights, and avenge insulted virtue, even with blood!

Enter the Countess.

COUNTESS.

Robert, what is all this? what are you about?

HALLERFELD.

Your pardon, madam! I know what is due to your roof and family—but did you know the cause——

COUNTESS.

Let it be what it may, I demand your respect for an old man—my guest and kinsman—I demand it, Robert!

HALLERFELD (*gazes at her for a moment in silence*).

Well, then, I will act like Carlos, when the queen stept between him and the Duke of Alva.*

[*Throws himself into Grünau's arms.*

GRÜNAU.

Oh! oh! young gentleman, you tread on my corns! [*Robert rushes out.*

COUNTESS.

What is the meaning of all this?

GRÜNAU.

Madness, absolute madness! I take my leave.

[*He goes out limping.*

COUNTESS (*looks after them in amazement;—a long pause.*)

Can it be possible? can it be really *possible?* I must ask my looking-glass—(*steps hastily to the mirror, and gazes at herself;*) is it possible? (*she turns away with a half-suppressed feminine self-complacency.*) Why—indeed——

The curtain falls.

* The allusion is to a famous scene in Schiller's tragedy of Don Carlos.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The same Apartment.*

The Countess alone.

COUNTESS.

No, I cannot doubt it—I have certainly made a conquest;—and when I think of Robert's romantic submission just now, and connect it with a thousand other indications—I am astonished that I did not sooner guess his secret. Yet, could I ever have dreamed of such a thing? The discovery is flattering, assuredly; but it is most inopportune and perplexing. I shall be obliged to withdraw myself entirely from this young man; and how will Grünau treat me, if, as I fear, he knows of this folly? Grünau, who can never

forgive me, that his brother left the guardianship of his daughter to me rather than to him: he will do what he can to render me ridiculous—perhaps misrepresent my character. I think I hear him coming—I am really in as much confusion as a girl of seventeen.

Enter GRÜNAU.

GRÜNAU (*in evident ill-humour*).

Madam, I am come to take my leave, else I should hardly have made my appearance here again, but politeness takes place of all things, in all circumstances.

COUNTESS.

Did you not think of staying with us till to-morrow?

GRÜNAU.

I did—but I've changed my mind; the air here doesn't agree with me. I've ordered the horses, and I shall be clear off in half an hour—ay, I shall—you may make yourself easy.

COUNTESS (*slightly embarrassed*).

Won't you take a seat, Baron?

GRÜNAU (*gruffly*).

I'd rather stand, by your leave; I've no intention of staying long—wouldn't for the world be in the way of a more welcome visiter.

COUNTESS.

I expect no one more welcome than yourself.

GRÜNAU.

Fair words, madam—but I'm sixty years old, and in these days we find it is only those just out of the nursery who are thought fit to rule states—and hearts.

COUNTESS.

Baron von Grünau, I do not understand you!

GRÜNAU.

O ay, ay—you are, as they say, a woman of sense—except in the case in question.

COUNTESS.

Do you mean to offend me?

GRÜNAU.

Not my intention—but, d'ye see, I think that when the heart's in the case, the cleverest people in the world make fools of themselves.

COUNTESS.

What do you talk of hearts?

GRÜNAU (*running on*).

Now the heart, you see, is like the main-spring of a watch—it is not visible, but it goes on, tick, tick, till it has brought twelve at night to three in the morning:—pray, when may I wish you joy?

COUNTESS.

Of what?

GRÜNAU.

The Baron von Hallerfeld has, I suppose, declared himself?

COUNTESS.

Declared himself?

GRÜNAU.

As your ladyship's suitor, I mean.

COUNTESS (*in confusion*).

You are too absurd—the young man—what do you suppose?—how can you believe?——

GRÜNAU.

I only believe what he told me himself.

COUNTESS.

He told you? Can he have so far forgotten himself?

GRÜNAU.

He intended to propose this very day.

COUNTESS.

O, my dear Baron, prevent it—I entreat——

GRÜNAU.

How should I prevent it? he is gone distracted; you saw yourself that we had nearly come to cut and thrust.

COUNTESS.

What *can* you have said to him?

GRÜNAU.

Nothing but the plain truth—but he wouldn't listen, and thinks himself sure of you, I can tell you.

COUNTESS.

Impossible!

GRÜNAU.

His own words.

COUNTESS (*walking about in anger*).

That were abominable.

GRÜNAU.

Ay, you see, such are the young coxcombs now-a-days; give them the little finger, they grasp the whole hand.*

COUNTESS.

My good will for him was so pure—I endeavoured to attract him from such honourable motives!

GRÜNAU.

It's a great pity that on this point no one will ever believe you.

COUNTESS (*with dignity*).

O, there are many who know my character too well—and, in the worst case, I have my own conscience to acquit me.

GRÜNAU.

Well, I will defend you as well as I can—for,

* A German proverb.

to judge from your honest indignation, I have done you some wrong.

COUNTESS.

Do you acknowledge so much?

GRÜNAU.

For it's true—is it not—that the young man is a fool? You have no idea of marrying him, have you?

COUNTESS.

How can you suppose such a thing?

GRÜNAU.

Yet, what will you do if he urges you? if he has the courage to make formal proposals?

COUNTESS.

Do! what duty and reason command me to do: but now to another subject—for I have a request to make to you, Baron.

GRÜNAU.

Pray command me.

COUNTESS.

You set off, you tell me, this very day—will you take Ida with you to town?

GRÜNAU.

Ida—and wherefore?

COUNTESS.

We may have scenes occurring in the house, which it would do her no good to witness. Take her to Madame de Braun—who is already prepared for the arrangement.

GRÜNAU.

What, have you still this nonsensical fancy about a boarding-school?

COUNTESS.

I shall in no case alter this part of my plan.

GRÜNAU.

Which doesn't please me at all—and you know it.

COUNTESS.

I do, and I am sorry for it.

GRÜNAU.

And yet you require that I should myself—

COUNTESS (*with decision*).

I depend on your obliging me.

GRÜNAU.

Well then—I have a place in the carriage. (*Aside.*) If I take her myself to school, it will, at least, look as if the uncle had some authority. (*Aloud.*) What were you saying?

COUNTESS (*who has been standing as lost in thought*).

I?—nothing.

GRÜNAU.

Here comes your Celadon.

COUNTESS.

Pray remain silent, and let me speak.

Enter HALLERFELD.

HALLERFELD (*entering in some confusion.*)

Your pardon, Countess!—ah, *you* here, sir?

GRÜNAU.

Well, are you quieter than you were?

HALLERFELD (*haughtily*).

I have promised the Countess to keep terms with you: I hope you will not tempt me to break my promise.

COUNTESS.

No more—no more of these ill tempers. (*To Robert.*) Have you had any letters from town?

HALLERFELD.

None.

COUNTESS.

I have. [*Significantly.*

GRÜNAU.

So? any particular news?

COUNTESS.

A good deal of news—but only one thing that I remember particularly, as being really extraordinary: it is said that the Generalin* Kirst is to marry young Reinsberg—I cannot believe it.

HALLERFELD.

Why not?

* In Germany the wife takes the title of her husband with the feminine termination; thus in conversation and in letters a lady may be addressed as *Frau Geheimräthin*, Mrs. Privy Councillor; *Frau Kanzlerin*, Mrs. Chancellor; *Frau Ober-Forstmeisterin*, Mrs. Commissioner of Woods and Forests; and so on. Generalin is the wife of a General.

COUNTESS (*impressively*).

What! a woman of a certain age—the widow of a distinguished man—choose for his successor a mere youth, who as yet has done nothing?—nay, as yet scarce knows what he *can* do?—excuse me, but such a proceeding were as reprehensible as ridiculous. I think I am called—with your leave!

[*She curtsies, and goes out. Robert stands overwhelmed.*

GRÜNAU.

That struck home!

HALLERFELD.

What?

GRÜNAU.

That, about the marriage.

HALLERFELD.

The Countess knows of my love then—does she?

GRÜNAU.

She knows all.

HALLERFELD.

And through your indiscretion?

GRÜNAU.

Not so—but through your nonsense about Don Carlos; and what she thinks of it all, you have just heard.

HALLERFELD.

Then am I undone; and the happiness of my

whole life destroyed! O why did you give words to that which I had scarce allowed myself to think? why tempt me to venture on a step which can never, never be recalled? You, you alone have poisoned my whole existence!

GRÜNAU.

Now must I be the scape-goat!

HALLERFELD.

O could I but be again—as I was yesterday!—then I was happy; there was a joy even in my grief.

GRÜNAU.

That pleasure, I should suppose, you can easily have again.

HALLERFELD.

Ah, you do not understand me: when love has once betrayed itself, friendship is out of the question. The delightful terms I was on with the Countess before she knew the secret of my heart, can exist no longer now she does know it—she will never forgive me, that I have dared to lift my eyes to her; and I—I feel I must at times remember with bitterness that she despised the devotion of my young heart. Offended pride on the one hand, wounded feeling on the other, will prevent, for the future, all confidence between us: I cannot live in this perpetual struggle between reserve on her part, shame on mine—and therefore will quit the house this very day.

GRÜNAU.

That, in fact, were the most sensible thing you could do.

HALLERFELD.

What care I for fame or for promotion? Only to please her did I wish to advance myself: now I have lost this object, there is an end of my ambition. I will give up my *carrière*, abandon my studies, and dissipation and amusement shall be henceforth all I will think of. I am rich enough. London and Paris are open to me: I will throw myself into every folly, and, in the whirlpool of pleasure, try to forget, that my life's chief good is lost for ever!

GRÜNAU.

Only don't play the fool too far;—you will come back to us—won't you?

HALLERFELD.

Heaven only knows!—you will make my adieus to the Countess?

GRÜNAU.

With the greatest pleasure.

HALLERFELD.

Tell her I thank her for all kindness she has shown me.

GRÜNAU.

I shall so.

HALLERFELD.

And that I entreat her to pardon my ill temper to-day.

GRÜNAU.

I understand.

HALLERFELD.

That it is her sentence that has driven me forth into the wide world.

GRÜNAU.

Very well.

HALLERFELD (*struggling with his emotion*).

And that I only wish she may find another heart as capable of understanding her own.

GRÜNAU.

Ay, ay!

HALLERFELD.

Tell her that I take with me the ring she gave me——

GRÜNAU.

So!

HALLERFELD.

And that I will never part with it but with life!

GRÜNAU.

A-hem!

HALLERFELD.

And if I die in a foreign land——

GRÜNAU.

O enough, enough! I can remember no more.

HALLERFELD (*looking up to heaven*).

O it is hard—hard to bear! [*He rushes out.*

GRÜNAU.

Ha, ha, ha! he's off—he's not gone in to see her again, however, and so far well:—I've looked her through—my lady Countess; she would have had him willingly, if it had not been for the fear of what the world would say: but I was at hand to tickle her up with pretty words and metaphorical speeches—till she forswore the whole thing, and can never give into it again. I'm not naturally ill-natured—but she has spoilt her niece's marriage, and now she sha'n't have him herself: no, justice must be done.

Enter IDA *and* SALOME, *both weeping.*

IDA.

Ah, dearest uncle—have I found you at last?

SALOME.

O, my good lord, help us!

GRÜNAU (*angrily*).

What the deuce is all this whimpering about? Such a scene comes in the nick.

IDA (*sobbing*).

Is it true that I am going away, uncle?

GRÜNAU.

You are going to town with me.

SALOME (*sobbing*).

And that I'm to be left behind?

GRÜNAU.

The dickey is small, and there's my valet—so that I have only the led horse to offer you.

IDA.

O my dear uncle, why am I to go away?

GRÜNAU.

Why?—for reasons—your aunt will have it so, and I too—you are to go to school with Madame de Braun.

SALOME.

So! it's all really true—and without me?

GRÜNAU.

Your education is finished.

SALOME.

O my poor dear young lady! O the wickedness of people! to separate you from the only one who really cares for you—that you may have nobody to complain to when they do you wrong—Oh! oh!

GRÜNAU.

Why, she is not going among savages, is she?

SALOME.

Do you think my young lady can wait upon herself at school?

GRÜNAU.

I know nothing about that.

SALOME.

Who will curl her hair for her every night?

GRÜNAU.

Don't bother me!

SALOME.

And who will nurse her when she's sick?

GRÜNAU.

Sick—lord bless us all! why, Salome, you are doting.

SALOME.

There—I see you too are against me——

GRÜNAU.

This nonsense puts me out of patience. You are making a fool of the poor girl:—fie, Ida—take heart, girl! when you are beside me in the carriage I will have none of this hanging of the head.

IDA.

O, uncle! it is as if I left my heart and soul behind me here!

GRÜNAU.

They'll not stay behind, never fear; or, if they do, they will soon be after you. In any case, it was all over with you here, for when we go, Baron von Hallerfeld goes too.

IDA.

He too! and where is he going?

GRÜNAU.

To London or to Paris; how should I know? to amuse himself—to divert his mind: but what does it signify?—let him go where he will;—who cares not for me, I care not for him. There, don't cry, I'll get you another husband; a man of wax* — a handsome man — far handsomer than Hallerfeld—you shall see: so come along, take heart.—Well, if you will go on crying and sobbing, have it out now—(*takes out his watch*) —you've just half an hour for it. [*Exit.*

IDA (*drying her eyes—after a pause.*)

So Hallerfeld is going away—far away: why is he going?

SALOME.

Because he *must*, poor young gentleman!—they've forced him to it.

IDA.

Has any one here offended him?

SALOME (*muttering*).

Intrigue—conspiracy—infernal arts—

IDA.

Pray, pray, dear Salome, speak out clearly.

SALOME.

Well, I don't see why I must keep my mouth

* Ein Herrchen zum mahlen.

shut—it's better you should learn to know the people you have to do with. Baron Hallerfeld wanted to marry *you*, and that didn't please some folks—and then—in short—your aunt wanted to marry him, and that didn't please *him;* and so there was nothing for him to do, you see, but to make off.

IDA.

My aunt!—what do you say?

SALOME.

Only ask your uncle if I fib—what have I always told you of my lady Countess? didn't I say so? you wouldn't believe me—and now you're forced to it.

IDA (*passionately*).

Salome—you will drive me mad!

SALOME.

Here comes my lady—don't make any remarks on what you have just heard, but stick fast to my going with you. If I can only be with you, it's all right.

Enter the COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

I am come, my Ida, to wish you a good journey, and bid you farewell, but for a short time only; in a few days I return to town, and shall then see you daily.

IDA (*with some reserve*).

You are very kind.

COUNTESS.

You seem uneasy; the arrangement I have made for you has taken you by surprise—confess it?

IDA.

I cannot deny it.

COUNTESS.

But, believe me, my anxiety for your welfare has alone suggested it; and is it not better, after all, to get over an anticipated pain as quickly as possible? (*To Salome.*) Have you packed up your young lady's things yet?

SALOME (*sulkily*).

I didn't know there was so much haste.

COUNTESS.

The post-horses are already harnessed—put what is wanting immediately into a trunk: what is not ready to-day we will send after her.

SALOME (*muttering as she goes*).

She would fain have the poor girl out of the house—well—— [*Exit.*

COUNTESS (*to Ida who is weeping*).

Tears, my child? be reasonable—this is not a case for tears, Ida!

IDA (*sobbing*).

To be thrown among strangers—all alone——

COUNTESS.

You have both seen and spoken to Madame de Braun, and she is as excellent in mind as she is amiable in manners.

IDA.

And if I must comply with your wish to go to her house, you will at least permit me to take Salome with me.

COUNTESS (*gently but firmly*).

That *cannot* be.

IDA.

I should think, that, considering the sacrifice I make——

COUNTESS.

'Tis *I* who make the sacrifice in parting with you, Ida; for I shall miss your society sadly: besides, you are leaving my house for a year only, and your Salome—whose devotion to you merits all your gratitude—remains with me, consequently, in good hands. Does not this content you?

IDA (*coldly*).

I must be content—since here I have no choice.

COUNTESS.

I wish you could see, Ida, that in this plan I have only your good in view.

IDA.

As I obey, my opinion can be of little consequence.

COUNTESS (*looking at her steadily till Ida's eyes drop beneath her gaze*).

Ida! there is something in your mind which you do not speak out—something not native to your heart—not right, my Ida. (*Earnestly and tenderly.*) Do you mistrust me?

IDA.

Ah! I would not willingly—but——

COUNTESS.

Some one has been trying to prejudice you against me—is it not so?

IDA.

O do not speak of it!—as you stand before me, there—looking so—I cannot, cannot think ill of you!

COUNTESS.

So! they *have* been speaking ill of me? I do not ask *who*—but I do entreat you to tell me what has been said of me.

IDA.

I cannot bring my lips to utter it.

COUNTESS.

I must persist in my request.

IDA.

No, no—I am too much ashamed.

COUNTESS.

Speak, Ida, and give me this proof of your affection.

IDA.

Then I will try: they say—but I don't believe it indeed——

COUNTESS.

They say—what?

IDA.

They say you have been opposed to my happiness—because—because——O do not let me speak *that!*

COUNTESS.

I opposed to your happiness?

IDA.

Yes—and *that* is the reason that Hallerfeld is going away.

COUNTESS.

Hallerfeld going? I knew not a word of it.

IDA.

Not know it?

COUNTESS.

No: where is he going?

IDA.

To London, my uncle says, or to Paris—to amuse himself—to try to forget——he is going this very day.

COUNTESS.

Is it possible? (*Aside*) this I cannot permit—it must be prevented.

IDA.

You are sorry—are you not?

COUNTESS (*walking aside*).

To abandon his studies, give up his *carrière*, and with his mind in this tumult of passion—without a friend—without an adviser, thus to throw himself into the whirlpool of society—he were lost—ruined!

IDA (*timidly*).

Perhaps you could persuade him to stay?

COUNTESS.

Perhaps;—meantime, farewell, my Ida,—and whatever may happen, you will not doubt me again, will you?

IDA.

Ah—surely not!

COUNTESS.

Had any prospect of happiness offered itself, I had assuredly secured it for you; but, trust me, that as yet, and for the present, there is nothing of the kind in view; so, my love, put all such thoughts and wishes out of your mind as are hardly fitting at your age, and be again the joyous child you were a few weeks ago. (*Embracing*

her.) We shall see each other again on Sunday. (*Aside as she goes out.*) He must not go—even though I am forced to some desperate means to prevent it. [*Exit.*

IDA.

I believe, after all, my aunt is in the right. I was happier than I am now, before Salome—and then my uncle——(*sighs.*) I believe it would be well if I *could* be a child again—but it will be hard;—my lessons seem more tiresome than ever, and all my plays foolish. If I am too young to take my place in the world, why, why have they made my mind older than it ought to be? (*She steps to the window.*) There is my uncle's carriage, and the horses already harnessed; in a few minutes I must be gone—and still, still I feel as if I *could* not go.—(*She takes a diamond ring from her finger.*)—I will leave a little memorial behind me of this hour—a little remembrance, that will exist for myself alone, which no one will ever see, and which I shall find when I come back. (*She writes with her ring on the window-pane.*) There it is—"Farewell, Robert!"—no one can see it, who does not look for it, and what will be my own thoughts when I see it again! shall I not laugh at it?—O no, hardly!

[*Hallerfeld enters, looking round the room as if he sought some one. Ida, who has been gaz-*

HALLERFELD.

And so you will have all you love near you.

IDA.

I hope so. (*Aside*). Ah, my aunt spoke truly! (*After a moment's struggle she speaks firmly and quickly.*) Good-bye, Baron von Hallerfeld!

[*Curtsies and exit.*

HALLERFELD (*after a pause*).

She requested to speak to me. What can she have to say? Does she repent to have wounded with scorn so young and so true a heart? or does she wish to renew an intercourse which I feel I could no longer endure? I know not; but I know that the next quarter of an hour must be, in any case, fraught with pain. I have hardly courage to knock at the door—that door which I have so often opened with a lightsome heart! and yet I must—I must!

[*After some hesitation, he knocks at the door.*

Enter the COUNTESS *from her room.*

COUNTESS.

Are you there, my dear cousin?* I have been waiting for you impatiently, and I hope you do not take ill the apparent incivility with which I left you standing with uncle Grünau just now?

* Vetter signifies kinsman or relation in a general sense.

—among good friends there should be no such misunderstandings.

HALLERFELD (*embarrassed by her easy tone*).

Madam, I——

COUNTESS.

If I *have* offended you, I offer my hand in token of peace.

[*Holds out her hand, which he kisses and then drops.*

HALLERFELD (*after a pause of embarrassment.*)

Was that all you wished to say to me?

COUNTESS.

O no! I have many other things upon my mind. Hallerfeld, is it true that you are about to leave us?

HALLERFELD (*looking down*).

Yes.

COUNTESS.

And this very day?

HALLERFELD.

I thought it best.

COUNTESS.

Why do you wish to travel?

HALLERFELD.

I wish to see the world.

COUNTESS.

But this project of travelling will interrupt your *carrière*.

HALLERFELD.

I have given it up for ever.

COUNTESS.

Excuse me, but that were folly, surely!

HALLERFELD.

Why so? I can live without an office under government.*

COUNTESS.

But as a means of being useful in the world, Hallerfeld?

HALLERFELD.

I do not see why I should strive to serve the world, which, in reward for such service, can offer nothing I care for.

COUNTESS.

Is, then, public respect quite worthless in your eyes?

HALLERFELD (*bitterly*).

Respect! To be respected, a man must be forty at least: that I have learned to my cost this day.

COUNTESS.

You are bitter, because you are ashamed to answer my question.

HALLERFELD.

O no! I am ready, as soon as you please, to explain clearly and openly the motives of my

* Anstellung has a more general sense.

actions, and that without blushing—for misfortune is, after all, no shame.

COUNTESS.

I have no desire to know all the caprices of your imagination; but I hope you will reconsider the grounds of your resolve, when I tell you that it grieves and offends me deeply.

HALLERFELD (*coldly*).

Has your ladyship any other commands for me?

COUNTESS.

You are going, then—really going? (*Hallerfeld bows in silence*). You once allowed me to believe that, as a friend, I had some influence over your mind!

HALLERFELD (*with emotion*).

Let us forget the past—it can return no more.

COUNTESS.

So reserved—so abrupt—I have never yet seen you, Hallerfeld!—

HALLERFELD.

You can have no wish that I should be more unreserved—more confiding. You think it beneath your dignity to suffer the attachment of such a mere—*boy!*

COUNTESS.

Who told you this?

HALLERFELD.

Yourself, madam, even now;—O I understood it but too well!

COUNTESS.

I?—when?

HALLERFELD.

Recollect what you said about the Generalin Kirst.

COUNTESS (*as if recollecting herself*).

Of her?—ah, right!—I remember; I reproached her with having connected herself (according to report) with a young man who as yet has done nothing to distinguish himself.

HALLERFELD.

And who knows whether love might not inspire such a man to achieve the noblest objects?

COUNTESS.

Methinks she might have waited the accomplishment of this miracle of love before she bound herself to him for life.

HALLERFELD (*eagerly*).

Do I understand you right? If the youth who aspired to a beloved object far, far above him, had by industry and talent raised himself to an equality with her, you would not *then* have condemned her choice?

COUNTESS.

His perseverance would then have proved the steadiness of his love.

HALLERFELD.

Then permit me to—forgive me if—O Countess! it is plain that you have guessed all! Be merciful! spare me the confusion of expressing what I perceive you know, and relieve me with one kind word!

COUNTESS.

Robert!

HALLERFELD (*with increasing fervour*).

I will wait—I will wait for years—till I become all you wish—only, only grant me *hope!*

COUNTESS.

Hallerfeld, you know not what you say—compose yourself!

HALLERFELD (*suddenly recovering himself*).

Heavens! what have I said—how could I for one moment imagine?—Countess, farewell! after having betrayed the secret which ought never to have passed my lips, yourself will allow that I ought to part from you for ever.

COUNTESS.

Stay, Hallerfeld!

HALLERFELD.

What! that you may enjoy the spectacle of my distraction? that were cruel—ay, and unjust; for though I am so far beneath you, and though you cannot love me—yet I have perhaps a heart worth the proving!

COUNTESS.

Who said that you were beneath me?

HALLERFELD.

Countess!

COUNTESS.

And who said I could not love you?

HALLERFELD.

Can it be possible?

COUNTESS.

That I do not indeed love you?

HALLERFELD.

Emilie!

COUNTESS.

Yes, I love you, and confess it now, because I see no other means of saving you from folly and ruin; only therefore do I confess it—O never forget that!

HALLERFELD.

'Tis true, then—true! O help me to understand my bliss!

COUNTESS.

No thoughts of travelling now, Hallerfeld?

HALLERFELD.

Travel! waste the precious time of which every hour is now of inestimable value? I were mad to think it. No, my powers henceforth are devoted to study, diligent, unremitting,—since, as the object—the reward of all my efforts, this dear hand awaits me!

COUNTESS (*disengaging her hand*).

One moment—(*she seats herself at the writing-table, and takes pen and paper*).

HALLERFELD.

What are you going to do?

COUNTESS.

Permit me one moment—(*she reflects, and then, while Hallerfeld stands gazing on her with enthusiasm, writes a few lines rapidly on the paper before her; when she has finished, she rings a small bell—a servant appears*)—A taper!

[*The servant goes out.*

HALLERFELD.

May I know, at length——

COUNTESS.

Immediately!

[*The servant appears with a taper, which he sets on the table, and leaves the room.*

COUNTESS (*folds the paper in an envelope, and seals it—then rises*).

Hallerfeld, you ask my hand, and believe—do you not?—that without it you will never be happy?

HALLERFELD (*with energy*).

Never! never!

COUNTESS.

Well, then, if you will promise that until I have found a proper match for Ida, and you have

obtained a situation suitable to your talents, you will be silent on the subject of our conversation to day—I consent.

HALLERFELD.

And I swear that I will make myself worthy of you!

COUNTESS.

My friend, it is possible that you may yourself, at some future time, mistake the step I have taken this day. This paper contains my justification—the full explanation of the motives which have induced me thus to act. I leave it in your hands, but you will not break the seal till the day on which we are betrothed.

[*She gives him the paper.*

HALLERFELD.

O were it but to-day!

COUNTESS.

It will come—meantime we shall see each other daily; for from this hour forth I consider myself your affianced bride. [*Exit.*

HALLERFELD (*gazing after her*).

My bride! did I hear aright?—is it no dream?—has my fate so miraculously changed? O if I could but believe it all!

Enter GRÜNAU (*in a travelling dress*).

GRÜNAU.

I am come to take Ida; my carriage is ready, and yours, too, Baron.

HALLERFELD.

Mine? it is to no purpose, then. I'm not going to travel. I've thought better of it. I'm afraid of the Paris pavement—the London smoke;—I'm better here—far, far better. Uncle, my dear uncle, let me hug you!

GRUNAU.

So—again! (*shrinking back*).

HALLERFELD (*embracing him*).

Excuse me, this is one of my mad days;—I'm mad with joy! and in your person I embrace the whole world! (*He hugs him, drags him round the room in a waltz, and then springs out of the door*).

GRÜNAU (*looking after him*).

Mad—quite mad!

The curtain falls.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

(TWO YEARS LATER.)

SCENE—*The same Apartment.*

IDA (*entering*).

It made me feel strangely to see him again. In the last two years he has grown more manly —handsomer, I think. Fortunately, he did not know me; for when I saw him standing there —the man in office—the secretary of legation —and thought of all the childish nonsense of old times, I felt almost painfully confused—but that will not be the case another time, when other people are by, and my aunt presents him to me formally. I know not when I was so pleased as at the idea of our breakfast to-day; a *bal champêtre* in the open air is something new—for

me at least. O I will dance—dance all day, every dance from the beginning to the end! I feel so happy, and in such spirits!—it must be this beautiful weather—of course.

Enter the COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

All is in full activity in the garden, and I think I see some carriages coming over the hill yonder—our guests probably; we shall have thirty people together in all.

IDA.

Has my uncle Grünau accepted your invitation?

COUNTESS.

I would wager anything that uncle Grünau is the first to arrive. He brings Count Bibereck with him.

IDA.

O I'm *so* glad! I like that Count Bibereck.

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

Why, yes, he has always abundance of pretty things for a young lady's ear.

IDA.

O it is not *that*;—but he amuses me, and besides——(*she stops suddenly*).

COUNTESS.

I have invited him to gratify Hallerfeld. They were schoolfellows, you know.

IDA.

Do you know, my dear aunt, that I have already seen Hallerfeld this morning?

COUNTESS.

Indeed! where did you see him?

IDA.

In the village, and before the door of old Margaret's house. I had persuaded her, for the first time, to venture into the open air: he stopped as soon as he saw me, and looked at me for some time without stirring: but he did not approach, nor did he speak. So I suppose he did not recognise me.

COUNTESS.

Probably not, for I doubt if he knows that you are here.

IDA.

Yes; I came from school, I remember, just as he was appointed *attaché* at Vienna; and you have not, I suppose, mentioned me in your letters to him?

COUNTESS.

Why, I do not think that during the whole year any particular good or evil fortune has befallen you, sufficient for the subject-matter of a letter.

IDA (*with a forced smile*).

I dare say he hardly recollects that I once lived under the same roof with him.

COUNTESS.

So much the better, for it will be like making a new acquaintance to-day Have you arranged your toilette?

IDA.

I intend to be dressed simply—quite simply.

COUNTESS.

Simply—yes; but with elegance and taste, I hope?

IDA.

O surely! and at this moment I cannot decide between two dresses—the white and the blue.

COUNTESS.

Choose then, for my sake, the one that is most becoming. I wish you to appear to advantage to-day—you understand!

IDA.

O trust me for that! you know, dear aunt, I am not vainer than is absolutely necessary: but at a ball, and a ball by daylight, one would not be the worst looking. (*She goes to the door, and returns.*) Don't you think, aunt, it would be best to wear the white dress? it is *sans pretension*, and looks so fresh!

COUNTESS.

Yes, right! (*She goes towards the writing-table —Ida going, stops, as meditating, and then turns back.*)

IDA.

On reflection, dear aunt, I think, after all, the blue is the prettiest.

COUNTESS.

Dress yourself as you please, my love. (*Ida goes out—the Countess seats herself at the writing-table, opens a small writing-case, and takes out a parcel of letters.*) His letters to me during the last twelvemonth—truly a respectable collection. Let us see—(*she opens two or three*)—July, last year, four pages——five—six pages—" Most beloved of human beings!"—etcetera. In December two pages—three—" My dearest Countess," and so forth. In April this year, so—one page—" Ever honoured friend!"—ah, April was a bad month, it seems! But what have we here?—alas! worse—in June last—half a page—business—want of time—and " My dear madam!"—O men, men!—but is it your fault if the enthusiasm* to which you give the name of love does not last

* Schwärmerei, with the verb, Schwärmen, and the adjective, Schwärmerische, one of those beautiful German expressions for which we have absolutely no equivalent. Schwärmen is to be in a state of enthusiasm, of fantastic or romantic excitement. Though we have not the word in English, we are not so absolutely without the thing, as some Germans affect to believe. I know English women, and men too, quite as capable of conjugating the verb Schwärmen through all its moods and tenses, as any German I ever met with. We make, however, rather a less serious affair of it.

for ever? Ought we not even to be thankful when such feelings subside into calm friendship, and not into absolute indifference?

Enter HALLERFELD.

HALLERFELD.

I do not disturb you, my dear Countess?

COUNTESS.

Not in the least; I was turning over your letters.

HALLERFELD.

You make me ashamed: I have lately been an idle correspondent: but as I knew I should have the happiness of seeing you again in a short time——

COUNTESS.

No need of apologies between friends; and, besides, your return has given me so much pleasure, that I cannot be angry with you, if I would. Pray sit down. (*He draws a chair, und seats himself at a very respectful distance.*) And now tell me something of Vienna,—were you pleased with it?

HALLERFELD.

Where all is gay around, we must needs be gay too, without prejudice to our longing after absent friends.

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

My Eldorado here will not appear very

brilliant in comparison with the city of the Cæsars?

HALLERFELD.

I cannot tell you how I felt when I first saw at a distance the spire of your village church: all the recollections of old happy times rushed over my mind, and tears filled my eyes.

COUNTESS.

You will remain with us some time?

HALLERFELD.

I can hardly say; for as I told you yesterday, they have appointed me secretary of legation, and I may consequently expect every hour to be ordered off to Frankfurt.

COUNTESS.

I see we must make up our minds to lose you shortly.

HALLERFELD.

If the idea of parting from me be indeed painful, it is in your power, dearest Countess, to avert it.

COUNTESS.

How so?

HALLERFELD.

By crowning at length my early wishes, and consenting to be mine for ever! (*He rises.*)

COUNTESS (*with emotion*).

Robert!—and if I were now inclined to yield to your wishes?

HALLERFELD.

I should feel myself no less honoured than happy.

COUNTESS.

You remain constant to your first intentions?

HALLERFELD.

Immovable!

COUNTESS (*tears in her eyes*).

I cannot express how deeply I feel it. (*She breaks off abruptly, and adds with a changed voice.*) Would you not like to visit your favourite spots in the garden before the company arrive?

HALLERFELD.

I have already visited all my old haunts. I have even been down to the village, and there I became a witness of a really touching scene; the door of a poor cottage opened, and an old and apparently sick woman appeared, supported by a young and well-dressed girl; the old woman was visibly revived by the warmth and freshness of the air, and the young girl placed an arm-chair for her in the quietest, cleanest spot, drew a shawl close round her, and placed a cushion under her feet; she reminded me of some sweet sister of mercy; and as I looked at her more attentively, I thought I had seen her before; but I did not venture to speak to her. Can you tell me who it could possibly be?

COUNTESS (*smiling*).

No other than your old friend Ida.

HALLERFELD.

Ida! I did not know she was staying with you?

COUNTESS.

For the last year. You would have seen her yesterday evening, if you had not arrived so very late.

HALLERFELD.

Ida?—yes, you are in the right—it was certainly her. She appears to be much improved.

COUNTESS.

Yes, praise her, Robert!—praise my Ida, if you would please *me!* I *am* proud of her—proud of her beauty—of her education—yet more of her heart. The old woman whom you saw her leading out of doors for the first time to-day, she has, by her own care, with help of her own little medicine-chest, recovered from a dangerous sickness, and felt all the delight of having preserved a mother to her family.

HALLERFELD.

I remember she had always a kind heart—as a child.

COUNTESS.

And, as a wife, I trust will soon form the happiness of a deserving man. I may confide it to

you, Robert: I have an excellent match in view for her.

HALLERFELD (*as suddenly struck*).

So!—indeed!—and may I ask who it is?

COUNTESS.

That I cannot tell you at present; for the person to whom I allude has not yet declared himself.

HALLERFELD.

Not yet?

COUNTESS.

But I think he will ere long. This, to say the truth, is the reason that I at once acceded to your proposal just now. Ida's marriage removes the last obstacle to our union.

HALLERFELD.

And do you believe that Ida loves the man you have fixed upon?

COUNTESS.

Yes; I have reason to think she likes him.

Enter COUNT BIBERECK.

COUNT BIBERECK (*to the Countess*).

In obedience to your ladyship's invitation, I have not ridden, but flown to you: uncle Grünau's old blacks seem to have sympathised in my impatience, and——

COUNTESS.

Look around you, my dear Count: do you see no one here but me?

COUNT (*looking round*).

Hallerfeld!—is it really you? Welcome back to your own country!—a thousand times welcome!*

HALLERFELD.

Alfred!

COUNT.

Be quiet! Let me look at you—(*he examines him from head to foot*)—yes, I'm satisfied; so now—let me embrace you! (*They embrace.*)

HALLERFELD.

Tell me how it is that you never wrote me a line in my absence?

COUNT.

I never write to any one; for in general one writes the most absurd things without being aware of it at the time; and if after a while such letters fall in one's way, one can never conceive how one came to write them.

HALLERFELD.

How is your kinsman Rudolf?—and your cousin Wilhelmina?—and our old Professor Rode?—and your friend Lieutenant Milden?

* The two friends address each other with the familiar Du.

COUNT.

All dead!

HALLERFELD.

Dead?

COUNT.

Consider them so for the present, else we shall be talking so much of our friends that we shall have no time to talk of ourselves.

COUNTESS.

Gentlemen, I will leave you together, if you will allow me. I must see how my little preparations go on, and will not interrupt your conversation. [*Exit.*

HALLERFELD (*looking after the Countess with a sigh*).

She is still very handsome—the Countess—*très bien conservée*—don't you think so, Alfred?

COUNT.

I have not thought about it: the charms of thirty or forty pass by me all unheeded.

HALLERFELD.

Then I pity you: for there are women who, even at that age, are really interesting.

COUNT.

May be so; but, now we are on the subject of women and beauty—you have been a whole year at Vienna—charming women there, Hallerfeld, hah! Have you escaped heart-whole from them

all, and come back to us free—have you ?—now speak the truth ?

HALLERFELD.

There were many who attracted my attention —my admiration, but not one who had power to fix me.

COUNT.

No !—I'm sorry for it !

HALLERFELD.

Why so ?

COUNT.

Why, you see—because—I fancy you may have some one in view.

HALLERFELD.

Possibly I may.

COUNT (*with vexation*).

There, I thought so !

HALLERFELD.

I do not understand you !

COUNT.

And she's here—close by—is she not ?—and it has been a settled thing some time—eh ?

HALLERFELD (*looking at him with amazement*).

Alfred !

COUNT.

Settled with the girl's family—eh ?

HALLERFELD.

The girl ?

COUNT

Why, is it not Ida that you are thinking of?

HALLERFELD.

Ida!—no.

COUNT.

Not Ida!—you've taken a millstone from my heart!

HALLERFELD.

Do you love her?

COUNT.

Almost—at least I never yet saw a girl who pleased me so well. Beauty, intelligence, simplicity, accomplishments, goodness of heart—she unites all the qualities that the most reasonable, or even the most unreasonable man could ask in a wife; and often as I have rebelled against the marriage yoke, I would not swear but that she might bring me to some desperate step at last. Have you ever heard her sing?

HALLERFELD (*with a half smile*).

Formerly.

COUNT.

O you must hear her now! but you have seen her dance?

HALLERFELD.

I only arrived a few hours ago.

COUNT.

The ball to-day will be a dangerous trial for

my freedom; for when she dances I am a lost man. But—(*looking at him*)—you grow more and more thoughtful, my friend; and in truth I am a fool to boast the girl off, and raise myself up a rival perhaps.

HALLERFELD.

Make yourself easy; even supposing that Ida charmed me as she has charmed you, it were for me too late.

COUNT.

You are no longer free?

HALLERFELD.

I am bound indissolubly.

COUNT (*embracing him in a rapture*).

Delightful! and may one know to whom?

HALLERFELD.

For the present, that is a secret; but in a short time I think I shall be able to divulge it—(*looking at him significantly*)—perhaps even this very day.

COUNT.

And on what does it depend?

HALLERFEED.

Even on yourself.

COUNT.

On a trial of my discretion?

HALLERFELD.

I know what I mean. (*Aside.*) The husband destined for Ida: I cannot doubt it.

COUNT.

Do I know your choice?

HALLERFELD.

To answer that were to betray too much.

COUNT.

Is she handsome?

HALLERFELD.

As to beauty—tastes vary.

COUNT.

And you marry for love, really?

HALLERFELD.

From respect—friendship—gratitude!

COUNT (*with a shrug*).

Ah, good Lord!

HALLERFELD.

The exalted feelings I have mentioned are better calculated to secure the happiness of life than all the enthusiasm of passion.

COUNT.

Ah! philosophy!—you know I never could understand anything of philosophy from our school days.

HALLERFELD.

It is possible that you might find fault with my choice.

COUNT.

Very possible indeed.

HALLERFELD.

But by-and-bye you will envy me.

COUNT.

That I doubt.

HALLERFELD.

And even supposing I should be less happy than I once hoped, I can never repent having adhered to a sacred promise.

COUNT.

Ay; but who would give his sacred promise so lightly?

Enter GRÜNAU.

GRÜNAU.

At last I am in a condition to produce myself before company. The dust—the intolerable dust—it has taken a quarter of an hour to brush my collar, and half an hour at least to shake it out of my wig. Ah, Baron von Hallerfeld! I have the honour to salute you!

HALLERFELD.

I am rejoiced to see you so well, and in such spirits, Baron von Grünau!

GRÜNAU.

Could almost fancy you are grown since I saw you—eh?

HALLERFELD (*smiling*).

I can hardly think so.

GRÜNAU.

Seen St. Stephens?—driven to the Prater?—been to the Augarten?*—heard Strauss—eh? Must tell me all about it when we have time; for the present, I will only ask one thing—do you remain here? or do you intend to leave us?

HALLERFELD.

I am ordered to Frankfürt.

GRÜNAU.

Good—very good! A young man must see the world—work hard—eh?

Enter the COUNTESS, *leading in Ida dressed for the ball.*

COUNTESS (*drawing Ida forward, who hangs back timidly*).

Here, Baron von Hallerfeld, let me present to you an old acquaintance.

HALLERFELD (*kissing Ida's hand*).

Have I, then, the happiness of being remembered?

* St. Stephen's, I need hardly explain, is the principal church at Vienna: the Prater is the celebrated park, or public promenade, on an island of the Danube: it derived its appellation from the Spanish word *prado*, when Spanish was the fashionable language at Vienna. The Augarten is a place of popular resort adjoining the Prater.

IDA.

Do you think me so forgetful? I am glad, after so long an absence, to have the pleasure——

HALLERFELD (*smiling*).

If I do not mistake, I have already had the pleasure of seeing you this morning; but you did not observe me?

IDA (*quickly*).

O yes!—(*she stops in confusion.*)

HALLERFELD.

Indeed! Do not blush that I surprised you in the performance of an act of charity.

IDA (*smiling*).

The old woman was a little unreasonable—that's all. She wanted to throw her shawl off, and put her feet on the cold stones. I assure you I had some trouble with her.

COUNT (*to Ida*).

Have you been entertaining yourself with another old woman? (*To Hallerfeld.*) The old village wives, I must tell you, are the Lady Ida's favourite companions.

IDA (*playfully*).

Am I not the nearest of kin to the lady of the manor? I share her privileges, and ought I not to share her duties too?

[*A servant enters, and speaks in a low voice to the Countess.*

COUNTESS.

All is prepared for our breakfast, and my guests are in readiness. What do you think,—shall we sit down to table, or have dancing first?

COUNT.

Dancing first: man must earn his bread before he eats it. (*To Ida.*) May I beg the honour of your hand for the first waltz?

IDA (*glances involuntarily at Hallerfeld, as she gives her hand to the Count.*)

With pleasure.

COUNTESS.

Let us go, then.

[*The folding-doors of the back scene fly open; guests are seen promenading in the garden, and music is heard at a distance; the Countess and Count Bibereck, leading Ida, pass out; the doors remain open, and towards the close of the following scene the music of a waltz is heard, but not loud enough to interrupt the conversation, and Ida and the Count are seen, with others, dancing in the back ground.*

GRÜNAU (*looking at the Count and Ida as they go out*).

Charming couple—lovely pair—eh?

HALLERFELD.

Who?

GRÜNAU.

Why, Count Alfred and Ida, to be sure. Don't blab; but I do hope to bring this marriage about. The Count talked of my niece in the carriage—in a sort of way—eh?—(*winking.*)

HALLERFELD.

And does the Countess know of your project?

GRÜNAU.

To be sure she does: nothing to be done here without the Countess—eh?

~~GRÜNAU.~~ Hallerfield

And she approves?——

GRÜNAU.

She's not against us; but she insists that nothing shall be said of it to either party, and matters shall arrange themselves, if it so please Heaven.

HALLERFELD.

There she is perfectly in the right. Alfred is a good fellow.

GRÜNAU.

Capital beau for the ladies!

HALLERFELD.

To whom I wish all the happiness in the world, most sincerely.

GRÜNAU.

You say that, now, with such a solemn face, one might doubt it were really true.

HALLERFELD.

I hope you do not think me capable——

GRÜNAU.

Not of envying your friend a good fortune left to him, nor a good place—no; but a pretty girl? such a thing were possible—eh? and, as one might say, in the common course of things.

HALLERFELD.

Baron von Grünan!

GRÜNAU.

But, in any case, you have no right to complain; for you might have had my niece if you had chosen. If you had but opened your mouth two years ago, you'd have had her; the girl liked you—I liked you—and the aunt must, if only for shame, have consented; but you chose to be fastidious, and now she's found another.

HALLERFELD.

Well, I must submit.

GRÜNAU.

Apropos, talking of our lady aunt, don't you remember the time you fancied yourself in love with her?—ha! ha!—and about Alva and Don Carlos?—d'ye remember—eh? Can't help laugh-

ing when I think of it—ha! ha! We were young in those days—eh, Baron? very young!

HALLERFELD (*seriously.*)

Young!—yes, and perhaps wiser *then* than now: youth has a spontaneously just appreciation of all that is really noble and good, which often fails us in later years.

GRÜNAU (*laughing*).

And your romantic melancholy—your being ready to challenge me—and your famous *coup de théâtre*——

HALLERFELD.

The demonstrations of the feeling might be ridiculous: the feeling itself not so.

GRÜNAU.

Lucky you're going off to Frankfürt, or we might apprehend a second paroxysm. That's a capital waltz: you would like to be taking a turn now, and here I keep you with my talk.

HALLERFELD.

I never dance.

GRÜNAU.

Not dance? ay, I thought so: like all the rest of you young gentry. Have to govern the world—no time for dancing!—may take to it perhaps at fifty, and then find it too late—eh? There goes Ida—flying round with the Count. That's

youth—youth all alive and merry, as it ought to be. Do you see there?

HALLERFELD.

Yes, I see.

GRÜNAU.

If you won't dance, at least come with me amongst them all.

HALLERFELD.

Will you go before?—I'll follow immediately.

GRÜNAU (*aside as he goes out*).

A strange young fellow this!

[*Exit through the folding-doors.*

HALLERFELD.

I feel myself in an ill-humour—fretted—impatient—and cannot myself tell why; is it that unpleasant feeling we all experience when we return a changed being among people and things that remain unchanged? or—is it possible?—is it the remembrance of the bright and for ever vanished dreams of my youth that oppresses me? Enough, my heart is crushed—narrowed: I wish I were far hence, and in active life again!

IDA (*entering from the garden*).

Baron Hallerfeld, my aunt has been asking for you, and has sent me here to tell you that you *must* dance; that she reckoned on you for her ball.

HALLERFELD.

The Countess must excuse me: I have always been an indifferent dancer, and am now quite out of practice.

IDA.

But a ball-champêtre—only among friends?

HALLERFELD.

I have really abjured dancing altogether.

IDA.

As you please—I have delivered my message. [*She turns to go.*

HALLERFELD (*detaining her*).

Will you go? O stay one moment! to see you there before me carries me back to former and happier days.

IDA.

You love, then, to remember those old times?

HALLERFELD.

Too well!—the realities of life never fulfil the promises of Hope, and therefore it is that the days of hope are the brightest in our existence: from my inmost heart I could wish even one of those days back again!

IDA.

One of such days as you spent with us two years ago? but, my dear Baron, you were then so—so gloomy and *so* melancholy!

HALLERFELD (*smiling*).

I was melancholy because I liked it—grief itself was then a sort of joy.

IDA (*quickly*).

Yes—I know—

HALLERFELD.

You know?

IDA.

Yes, I—I think—that all the young are alike in certain things.

HALLERFELD.

Then you have yourself sometimes felt the pleasure of sadness?

IDA.

Yes, sometimes I have almost wished to have a real downright grief, or that somebody would really vex and contradict me that I might have some just right to sit down and cry to my heart's content. But then, understand, that was not always my natural disposition, and as soon as the cloud passed over, I was again gay as a lark.

HALLERFELD.

Do you remember how we used to water your aunt's flowers together?

IDA.

Surely, I remember it well: and how you climbed the tree to get me the linnet's nest.

HALLERFELD.

Do you recollect that?

IDA.

One of them is still alive.

HALLERFELD.

And in what despair you were to be sent off to school—do you remember?

IDA.

Yes! O you are still the same Hallerfeld!—not the statesman—the ambassador's secretary. Would you believe that I was quite frightened this morning at the idea of appearing before you? but now that is all over, and I only wish you could stay with us a long, long time.

HALLERFELD (*taking her hand*).

No one can wish that more than myself: I am happier here than I have felt for years. (*Leading her to the window.*) When I look out upon those hills, that river, those meadows—do you remember it was in yonder field that we had the shooting-match two years ago?

IDA.

When Big Michael carried off the prize?

[*The Countess appears at the open door.*

HALLERFELD (*his attention caught by the inscription on the window-pane*).

Robert! my name?—what have we here?

IDA (*frightened, attempts to draw him away*).

O nothing—how should I know?

HALLERFELD.

'Tis your own handwriting; "Farewell, Robert!" meaning me?

IDA (*in confusion*).

My aunt is waiting for you.

HALLERFELD.

There was no other Robert in the house, so I shall take it to myself without scruple. When was it written?

IDA.

O, when I was a child!

HALLERFELD (*playfully*).

In mirth or in sadness?

IDA (*reproachfully*).

O Hallerfeld!

HALLERFELD.

On the day you left us, was it not?

IDA.

I believe so.

HALLERFELD.

You were sorry, then, to think you should not see me again?

IDA.

Yes—surely——

HALLERFELD.

And therefore I may believe you felt some kindness for me?

IDA.

I feel kindly—to—to everybody.

HALLERFELD.

Angel! (*Kissing her hand, drops it suddenly.*) Whither am I going?

COUNTESS (*advancing*).

I see I must come myself to seek you, Robert, for you do not obey my ambassadress here: my little fête, without boast I may say it, is really very pretty. It is given in your honour, and you really *must* dance.

HALLERFELD.

I have left off dancing for the last two years.

COUNTESS.

You must make an exception to-day; the couples are standing up, and if you do not join them, Ida will be left without a partner.

HALLERFELD.

Only your commands, believe me, could induce me——

COUNTESS (*playfully*).

Well, then, I command. Ida, go on before—in two minutes I will join you with the Baron.

IDA (*kissing the hand of the Countess*).

What a delightful day, dearest aunt!

[*She goes dancing out through the folding doors.*

COUNTESS (*looking at him*).

Robert, you do not appear in spirits!

HALLERFELD.

How so, my dear Countess?

COUNTESS (*smiling significantly*).

But I think I know a means to restore them.

HALLERFELD.

My dear Countess——

COUNTESS.

I believe we may celebrate our betrothing this very evening—what do you say to that?

HALLERFELD.

This very evening?—impossible!

COUNTESS.

Yes, for the gentleman to whom I alluded this morning, whom I wish to see married to Ida, has at length declared himself.

HALLERFELD.

Is he here, then?

COUNTESS.

He is. I think I have read Ida's heart, and do not doubt that she will accept his proposals: so that from this moment I consider her as a bride, and may now think of my own nuptials, which in a few hours I will announce to our company,—(*pauses*)—that is, if you approve of it.

HALLERFELD (*rousing himself with an effort*).

Can you doubt it?

COUNTESS (*taking his hand affectionately*).

I have no doubts! have you the sealed paper which contains my justification?

HALLERFELD.

It lies in my writing-case.

COUNTESS.

Do not forget to have it about you this evening. I am going to invite the company to assemble again in my garden at seven. O Robert! now may I say that this is indeed the happiest day of my life! [*She goes out.*

HALLERFELD.

Be still, my heart! honour and gratitude point the way;—I obey their dictates!

[*He goes out after the Countess.*

The curtain falls.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The same Apartment.*

SALOME (*entering*).

I COULD only see the dancing at a distance, but I enjoyed it for all that. The other young ladies might prank themselves in flowers and ribbons, but our Ida was still the prettiest of them all; and then she danced!—'twas for all the world like one of them little loves with wings at their shoulders, that one sees painted on the walls of the pavilion among the heathen gods and goddesses, —one did not hear her foot fall. Count Bibereck seemed vastly attentive, but Baron von Hallerfeld couldn't take his eyes off her. That Baron von Hallerfeld, now, of all the young gentlemen, he still pleases me best; and there's something

in my heart always whispering that he and no other, let people do what they will, is to marry my young lady at last. I don't think, for my part, that she would care to have any man but him—no, I don't think she would.

Enter HALLERFELD (*without observing Salome*).

HALLERFELD (*aside*).

This evening, she said, this evening am I irrevocably bound! and just on this very day am I obliged to confess to myself that the conversation with Ida has shown me how far I have been mistaken in my thoughts and feelings. Fortunately I shall not be obliged to live near her, for she will marry, and I shall go far, far away. (*He stands lost in thought*).

SALOME (*curtsies*).

Good evening, Baron von Hallerfeld, a very good evening—do you remember me?

HALLERFELD.

How could I forget Mamsell Salome? I am heartily glad to see you again.

SALOME.

Glad to see me! no one can deny that your lordship was always kind and civil, and so you are still, I see.

HALLERFELD.

As I ought to be.

SALOME.

And truly, my lord, I deserve that you should be a wee bit friendly towards me, for I'm devoted to your honour with all my heart. Only ask my young lady if I have not talked about you to her every day.

HALLERFELD.

And your young lady, did she too speak of me?

SALOME.

That is just what, perhaps, I ought not to tell you.

HALLERFELD.

Why not? am I not an old acquaintance—a friend of the family?—speak, my dear Mamsell Salome!

SALOME (*aside*).

His dear Salome! there's no resisting that! (*Aloud.*) Why, when we did talk of you, I must confess my young lady was always the one to begin.

HALLERFELD (*joyfully*).

Indeed! (*More seriously.*) Your young lady is now eighteen.

SALOME.

Yes, indeed!—ah, that makes me almost an old woman!

HALLERFELD.

She is greatly improved.

SALOME.

I think so, indeed!

HALLERFELD (*with a sigh*).

And she will soon marry!

SALOME (*smiling*).

High time she should; but *whom* will she marry?

HALLERFELD.

Count Bibereck is paying his addresses to her.

SALOME.

O, he? ——

HALLERFELD.

The Countess thinks that Lady Ida is by no means indifferent to him.

SALOME.

Why, certainly, she talks with him more willingly than with others, but the Count need not take it all to himself; oh no, there's a reason for it!

HALLERFELD.

What reason?

SALOME.

Well, I ought not to tell you that, either—but what help? you've opened my heart, you have, so that I can hide nothing. You see, the Count

is your friend, so she has always had news of you at second-hand, and well she knew how to get it all out of him ;—cunning, ah!

HALLERFELD (*with emotion*).

And that was the reason?

SALOME.

And then she has a little bird, which you gave her, and that she loves, I think in my heart, better than she loves me.

HALLERFELD.

Ida—dear sweet Ida!

SALOME.

That touches you, does it not?

HALLERFELD.

It surprises me.

SALOME.

Ah, I could tell you a great deal more—but it won't do; it's not right nor proper. If, two years ago, there was nothing done, it wasn't her fault; she didn't make no objection, and therefore it was that she was thrust out of the house—neck and heels.*

HALLERFELD.

Indeed?

SALOME.

However, there's no great mischief done, and you are now a man of the world, and needn't be

* Hals und Kopf, *neck and head*, is the German Idiom.

commanded by nobody. I say no more; but if I only live to see the happiness—the only happidess I wish for—then I would close my eyes willingly on this world. [*She goes out.*

HALLERFELD (*after a pause*).

She loves me—Ida loves me! and I, fool that I am, have flung away the happiness of my whole life! How could I fail to see, at the first glance, that she, and she only, was the angel sent by heaven to offer me peace and blessedness? O mistaken enthusiasm of youth, for which, as a man, I must now suffer the penalty! Suffer? and does then such a miserable fate await me, in the hand of that noble-minded, excellent woman, to whom I am bound by the deepest reverence, who saved me from the snares of the world—who roused my mind to laudable activity and usefulness?—to whom I owe all I have accomplished—all that I now am? The Countess loves me sincerely—is handsome still—is gifted, good, amiable; ah! but these very qualities which I boast in her, Ida, her charming *élève*, possesses them all—and with them, instead of the serious experience of the Countess, all the joyous simplicity of youth. I ought to have met Ida no more: but since I have met her—(*in a resolute tone*)—I will at least show what a man of honour *can* do in the strife of feeling. Never shall the Countess

know of this aberration of my heart; and Ida shall learn from myself how I stand with her aunt; thus, perhaps, I may destroy in her young heart the germ of a passion of which she is scarcely aware herself, and fulfil my duty to both.

IDA (*entering hurriedly*).

IDA.

Pray excuse me, Baron, for coming upon you so abruptly; I see I have startled you.

HALLERFELD.

I was lost in thought.

IDA.

I was going to ask the maître d'hôtel* if all is in order for the supper this evening.

HALLERFELD (*detaining her*).

All;—the maître d'hôtel has just told me so himself.

IDA.

If I only knew why my aunt is going to give another entertainment to-day! we are all a little tired after the dance this morning.

HALLERFELD.

She has possibly some especial motive for what she does.

* Der Haushofmeister.

IDA.

Do you know, I begin to suspect so?—some very particular motive, and a pleasant one too; for she goes tripping along in the garden like a girl of sixteen, and makes her arrangements and gives her orders with such a smiling air, as who should say, "Rejoice with me, you have good cause!" Do you think it can be my aunt Freising who is coming to take us by surprise?

HALLERFELD.

No, it is not that which occupies the Countess at this moment.

IDA.

You are then in the secret?

HALLERFELD.

I am.

IDA (*sportively*).

I don't mean to ask you to betray it, but couldn't you give me just—the least—little hint?

HALLERFELD (*very gravely*).

That is exactly what I wished to do.

IDA.

But you make such a serious face about it!

HALLERFELD.

It *is* serious.

IDA.

Serious? and my aunt is so joyous,—gay as a child?

HALLERFELD.

What is serious is not always sad, Ida. How old do you think your aunt is?

IDA (*looking at him with surprise*).

I don't know, exactly—but I suppose about forty.

HALLERFELD.

Ahem! —she is a good deal younger.

IDA.

May be so; but what has my aunt's age to do with it at all?

HALLERFELD.

Your aunt has been a widow now for some years; she is rich, free, and worthy to captivate any man: and would you not look upon it as quite natural if she were to think of forming a second union?

IDA.

My aunt? it is not right of you to speak so!

HALLERFELD.

And why?

IDA.

My aunt?—it is not possible!

HALLERFELD.

Then, what would you say if it were really the case? you would not make it a subject of reproach to your aunt—would you?

IDA.

I should never presume to censure any action of my aunt, whatever it might be, for I know that she never acts but from principle: but, as to what you have just told me, you must excuse me if I cannot believe it—no, never!

HALLERFELD.

You will believe it this evening.

IDA.

Pray, Baron, do not make me so—so unhappy!

HALLERFELD.

Unhappy—and why? why should it make you unhappy that your aunt marries again?—can she not be as kind to you, as careful for your welfare, as ever?

IDA.

I do not doubt it; but I never yet have thought of such a thing as possible, and I know not how I shall reconcile myself to it, if it happens.

HALLERFELD.

You owe a great deal to your aunt.

IDA (*with animation*).

Say, rather, that I owe her all, that I am the work of her hands! and therefore it is that I look up to her as to a mother.

HALLERFELD.

And would you not rejoice, for her sake, if,

after the sorrows she has encountered in the world, she should meet with such happiness as is best suited to her character—if, after having lived so long for others, she were to begin to live for herself?

IDA.

Robert, I did not mean *that*—in truth, I did not! but I can hardly—I know not why—but I cannot think of my aunt as married, without a disagreeable feeling; and yet, if her happiness depended on another marriage, I would lay down my life to secure it. So now speak openly—tell me all, at once—for that you know all, is plain.

HALLERFELD.

The Countess has been engaged for the last two years, and will make known her choice this day.

IDA.

For two years?

HALLERFELD.

Yes—it was for your sake that she has hitherto put off her marriage.

IDA.

For my sake?

HALLERFELD.

She wished to finish your education before she took other duties on herself.

IDA.

O my dear good aunt!—and who is the bridegroom?

HALLERFELD.

A man who, like yourself, owes everything to her.

IDA.

Robert!

HALLERFELD.

Even myself.

IDA (*utters a suppressed cry—but instantly commanding herself*).

You—Hallerfeld!

HALLERFELD.

Yes! and never believe that she sought, out of mere vanity, to lead in her chains a youth like myself, as her enemies once insinuated: she never by word or look betrayed her affection for me; only when, in all the desperation of a youthful passion, I stood before her, and left her no choice but between my love and my ruin—did she first open her heart to me.

IDA (*struggling with her emotions*).

A heart that—that every deserving man might envy you, and that you must make happy—happy, Robert, if ever I am to respect you.

HALLERFELD.

What ails you, Ida?

IDA.

Nothing—never mind me—it will soon be over.

Enter the COUNTESS.

COUNTESS.

All is ready for my little banquet, and the guests will soon assemble: have you the paper about you, Robert—the paper—you know?

HALLERFELD.

I have left it in my room.

COUNTESS.

Will you go for it, and bring it down into the garden, where I shall wait for you? Now, Robert, the moment you wished for is at length arrived! was I not right when I said that two years would soon pass away?

HALLERFELD (*kissing her hand*).

And, to the end of my life, you shall find me as to-day—ever grateful—ever devoted.

[*He hurries out.*

The COUNTESS—IDA.

IDA (*aside*).

He is not happy—no—and, for the future, I must live at a distance from my aunt's husband: that is what the feeling of my heart dictates; I cannot be deceived in it.

COUNTESS.

Ida, you are silent; you do not understand the meaning of all this.

IDA.

Dearest aunt, I was then thinking of something very different.

COUNTESS (*looking at her*).

And not very agreeable, as it seems.

IDA.

Assuredly nothing pleasant—and I feel some difficulty in telling it to you.

COUNTESS (*caressingly*).

What!—your old mamma?

IDA.

O you have always been so tender to me—so considerate—so kind—I shall never, never forget it all! and even if the time must come when I can no longer have the happiness of passing my life at your side—— [*She bursts into tears.*

COUNTESS.

Ida! what change is this?

IDA.

But I will pray, every returning morning, for your welfare—and I shall be heard, and you will be happy! for all that you have done for me—your orphan Ida—God will bless you!

[*She throws herself into her arms, and hides her face upon her bosom.*

COUNTESS.

My love, I never doubted either your affection or your gratitude; but what has caused this excitement since I saw you?

IDA.

Ah, dearest aunt, you must hear me say all this, that you may not think me insensible to all I owe you—if now—I entreat——

[*She stops short.*

COUNTESS.

If you entreat?

IDA.

That you will allow me—— [*Stops short.*

COUNTESS.

Allow—what?

IDA.

Allow me go to my uncle Grünau.

COUNTESS.

How came such a thought into your mind, Ida?

IDA.

You know that more than two years ago, after my father's death, my uncle expressed a wish to have me with him. He is old, childless—I think my society would be a comfort to him.

COUNTESS.

And what it would be to me, Ida—you do *not* think?

IDA.

Not so much as to my uncle—and, in a short time, nothing.

COUNTESS.

In a short time, nothing?—Confess, Ida, that Robert has betrayed to you the secret of our preparations for this evening?

IDA.

He has! he has! O do not be angry with him!

COUNTESS.

And you disapprove of my intentions?

IDA.

How could I, dear aunt, presume to judge of any intention of yours?

COUNTESS.

And yet, as it seems, it is my present position* which impels you to leave me.

IDA (*confused*).

How can you think so?

COUNTESS.

I wished much to have found an eligible *partie* for you, my love, before I announced my own marriage; but I can no longer defer it; for the Baron is under the immediate necessity of leaving us.

IDA.

I understand——

* Mein Brautstand.

COUNTESS.

And yet, who knows but that you may be married before me, Ida?—the attachment of Count Bibereck becomes daily more serious.

IDA.

O aunt! I hope the man is incapable of serious love.

COUNTESS.

You *hope* it?

IDA.

For his sake I hope it, for I could never return his love.

COUNTESS.

No! and yet, hitherto, you seemed to take pleasure in his society.

IDA.

O yes—that was——but to-day—at the ball-he made me almost dislike him.

COUNTESS.

And yet I flattered myself——

IDA.

O no—no! Why, after all, must I be married? I am rich—and when I take the management of my estate, I can make my tenants happy, I can superintend the schools, and do good to the poor. O, in any case I have a sphere of active usefulness and content before me!

COUNTESS (*with deep emotion*).

You think so, Ida?

IDA.

Yes, I think so, dearest aunt: and my request to go to my uncle has not offended you—has it?

COUNTESS (*struggling to speak*).

On the contrary——

IDA.

However distant from you, I shall rejoice in your happiness: do you not believe this?

COUNTESS.

I do believe it.

IDA.

And if ever—which heaven forbid!—misfortune should happen to you—if you are sad, and have no one in whose bosom you can repose your grief, then send for me, or write me two lines—only a word, and I will fly to you—at least to weep with you, if I can do no more!

COUNTESS (*folds her in her arms, and presses her fondly to her bosom—after a pause.*)

Ida, you have well-nigh tempted me into a sin. I could be almost proud of that heart which, after all, I did not give you! But enough, for if we speak longer in this strain, we shall go on crying like two children, and I will have no more tears to day; I will wholly enjoy the moment which awaits me.

IDA.

I have not yet offered my congratulations—accept them now, as warm as they are sincere!

[*Embraces her aunt.*

COUNTESS.

I accept them,—you have, indeed, reason to congratulate me, Ida! Now let us go.

[*They go out.*

[*The scene changes to the garden, decorated as if for a festival, with garlands of flowers, &c.—Chairs are set.*

GRÜNAU—COUNT BIBERECK—*several* LADIES *and* GENTLEMEN: *in the distance* SALOME, *with a crowd of* PEASANTS, SERVANTS, *&c.*

A LADY (*waving a green bough in her hand*).

O these gnats! these detestable gnats!—this is what people call pleasure! I had rather far have gone back to town; they give the Somnambula to-night.

ANOTHER LADY.

To confess the truth, I have no dislike to staying this evening: I rather suspect it will turn out more interesting than we anticipated.

[*The ladies whisper together.*

GRÜNAU.

Tell me what in the name of fortune is going on here? That some mystery is in hand, is beyond

doubt—but what? If you know anything of it, Count, help me out of this puzzle, for I am half afraid that some nonsense or other will be the issue of it all.

COUNT (*sullenly*).

Why, indeed, for that matter, good sense becomes daily more uncommon in the world.

GRÜNAU.

The Countess would not allow me to see her to-day.

COUNT.

Give you joy—the fewer people one sees the better.

GRÜNAU.

Why so?

COUNT.

They bore one.

GRÜNAU.

You are out of humour?

COUNT.

Horribly!

GRÜNAU.

With or without reason?

COUNT (*striking his forehead*).

O with—with!

GRÜNAU.

You alarm me!

COUNT.

Never mind—since this morning I have got over it.

ONE LADY (*to another*).

A betrothing, do you say?

ANOTHER LADY.

Yes, Hallerfeld declared himself at the ball this morning.

FIRST LADY.

For the aunt, or for the niece?

SECOND LADY.

For the niece, of course.

FIRST LADY.

Why, formerly he was paying his court to the aunt!

SECOND LADY.

Never believe it!

FIRST LADY.

Yes, it was the current report in town; the Countess has some reason to be mortified if he has revolted to her niece.

A GENTLEMAN (*presenting flowers*).

May I bring you a tribute of stolen goods?

[*The ladies take the flowers.*

Enter HALLERFELD.

HALLERFELD.

The Countess not here yet!

GRÜNAU.

Not yet—but meantime 'tis well you have come, Baron; help me to raise your friend's spirits—he is quite in the blue devils to-day.

HALLERFELD.

Alfred!

COUNT.

Leave me alone: you are a very likely man to raise my spirits, who are yourself the cause of my ill-humour.

HALLERFELD.

I! how so?

COUNT.

But 'twas my own stupidity too—fool that I was! to draw you such a picture of the girl, such a portrait *à la Titian!*

HALLERFELD.

Of Ida?

COUNT.

Yes, I seem to have expended all my eloquence, only to make her interesting in your eyes.

HALLERFELD.

I hear you have proposed.

COUNT.

No, no, luckily; but I was on the brink of it. But it will be some time now before the devil tempts me so again.

HALLERFELD.

Alfred, believe in the word of an honest man! I remain true to my first vows. I am not your rival; I have no pretensions to the young lady. Love her—try to win her! I shall be rejoiced if you succeed, and have the power to make her happy.

COUNT.

No, no, no; my love for her is yet in the bud; but I see there is no trifling with it. I might lose my heart utterly, wholly, and get the turn off at last; for though I have all the vanity of an eligible *partie*, at the ball to-day my eyes were opened: as soon as you came, there was no notice for me: I found myself *planté là!*—and then I remembered how often she used to inquire about you:—no, no—many thanks; but I quit the field at once and for ever—'tis wisest.

Enter the Countess *and* Ida, *in full dress.*

COUNTESS (*curtsies to the company*).

I thank you all, my good friends, cordially, that you have acceded to my request, and have accepted my invitation for a second *reunion* to-day; assured of your kindness, of your sympathy, I could not celebrate this happiest hour of my life more fitly than in your society.

FIRST LADY.

Explain yourself, dearest Werdenbach.

SECOND LADY.

I am really anxious——

GRÜNAU.

Now, thank heaven, we shall have it all out.

COUNTESS.

You look at me wonderingly; you wish to know what is the object of a festival so suddenly announced, yet splendid as time and means would allow? What will you think when I tell you that this is my betrothing-day?

FIRST LADY.

Your betrothing!

SECOND LADY.

YOURS, Emilie!

GRÜNAU (*eagerly to the Count*).

There, hear that! Was I right or not?

COUNT.

Astonishment!

COUNTESS.

I have been engaged for the last two years to the Baron von Hallerfeld. Family affairs have hitherto prevented me from making it known; but these obstacles are at length removed; and I am now proud and happy to present to you Baron Robert as my bridegroom.

HALLERFELD (*advancing*).

And he has vowed to render himself worthy of your choice while life is granted to him.

[*He kisses her hand respectfully, and all the company gaze on one another with astonishment*.

COUNTESS (*looking round her*).

You seem surprised, my friends! You cannot conceive what could induce a staid old widow to become faithless to the memory of a beloved husband, for the sake of a young man scarce of age? Perhaps you silently condemn me, and accuse me of folly and precipitancy? Listen, then, to my justification, written two years ago, and left sealed in the hands of Baron von Hallerfeld. Robert, where is my letter?

HALLERFELD.

Here, madam.

COUNTESS.

The moment is arrived—open it, and read what it contains. It is important that my friends, and those who live under the same roof with me,* should understand me as I am.

HALLERFELD (*breaks the seal and reads*).

"When I told you that I loved you, Robert, I spoke the truth; I do love you—not, indeed, as you fancy, but with such love as a mother feels for a son." (*He stops in agitation.*)

* Meine Hausgenossen is the beautiful German expression.

COUNTESS.

Go on!

HALLERFELD (*continues*).

"Only that I might be enabled to fulfil my promise to your dying father, and watch over your youth; — only to prevent you from being betrayed by an absurd passion into folly and error, have I lent myself to a deception which has doubtless exposed me to misconstruction; but I do it willingly, thus to secure, as I hope, the happiness of your future life, and believing that those who may now condemn me will do me justice hereafter. When you read these lines, my work is finished: you require my guidance no longer, and gladly do I resign the title of your bride to the woman of your maturer choice."

[*He remains silent and with downcast eyes, and the rest express in different ways their wonder and admiration—a pause.*

COUNTESS.

Robert, you now know my real sentiments; have you nothing to say?

HALLERFELD.

Astonishment, admiration, leave me no power to speak. O how shall I ever prove my gratitude?

COUNTESS (*presenting Ida*).

By making my Ida happy!

HALLERFELD.

Ida!

IDA.

Me! dearest aunt!

COUNTESS.

He is your husband. (*To Robert.*) I can never forget that you would have sacrificed your love to your gratitude—nor can I offer you a higher reward than in giving you a wife who has acted as Ida has done.

GRÜNAU.

Your hand, Countess! (*He kisses it with respect.*) Your pardon for all known and all *unknown* offences. I say no more.

COUNT.

Robert has a fool's luck with a vengeance!

COUNTESS (*joins the hands of Ida and Hallerfeld, and pressing them in her own, looks up to heaven*).

Thus, my noble, my sainted friend, have I kept my word!

The Curtain falls.

THE END.

THE PRINCELY BRIDE.

(Die Fürstenbraut.)

A DRAMA.

IN FIVE ACTS.

REMARKS.

I WAS informed, when last in Germany, that the PRINCELY BRIDE had been, as an acting play, the least popular of all the Princess Amelia's early dramas. It is likely, notwithstanding, to prove one of the most striking and interesting to the English reader, not only from its intrinsic elegance, but as presenting to the life a *tableau* for which we could find no pendant in the social relations of this country ;—the court of a petty prince.

It is interesting, too, as being the earliest of the Princess Amelia's productions ; for though not acted publicly till 1835, it was written, as her Royal Highness informed me, some years before the appearance of " Falsehood and Truth." It seems quite natural that she should have taken her first subject from the sphere in which she moved. Never, perhaps, was a courtly group sketched off with such finished delicacy—such life-like truth—such perfect knowledge of and command over the materials employed. We have no other instance, I think, of the portrait of a princess delineated by the hand of a princess, and informed with sentiments and feelings drawn possibly from her own nature, or at least suggested by her own position. It is easy to conceive that one cause of this drama not being oftener performed, is the very truth of the picture it represents. I have been told that at the Burg Theatre at Vienna it was set aside, because it was not thought decorous to exhibit all the de-

tails of a modern court upon the stage; and as almost all the theatres of Germany are attached to the court of some sovereign prince, and form a part of his state establishment, subject to his pleasure, the same feeling may have prevailed elsewhere; but on this point, I do not pretend to speak *avec connaissance de fait*, I only mean to say, that "'tis pretty sure, and very probable."

The English reader may imagine the Princess-Bride, the heroine of the drama, to be the daughter of one of the petty sovereigns of the German Confederation,—of some duke, or grand duke, or prince, with a territory perhaps half as large as Yorkshire, and a revenue of two or three hundred thousand a year. The daughter of such a prince would, in these days, receive an education very similar to that of our female aristocracy of the highest rank. She would be as carefully instructed in the usual accomplishments; her intellect as well cultivated within the usual bounds; and she would be even more watchfully excluded from all knowledge of her own nature and the nature of the wide, many-peopled world around her, with which she must never come into contact but under artificial or illusive circumstances. She would be taught that the first duties of her high station were an affable demeanour to her inferiors, and charity to the poor; and while the whole tendency of the education given to her, and the circumstances of her position, would be to foster individual pride, the slightest assumption of it would be suppressed, because it would remain unprovoked by any competition of pretensions; or checked, because it would be regarded as a fault of manner—unpopular, unprincess-like, unlady-like.

Thus shut out from all contact or acquaintanceship with the real social world by a cortége of Grandes-maîtresses, governesses, and ladies of honour, she would become, if amiable, an object of common love, as well as of common care and reverential respect: no wind of heaven suffered to visit her face too roughly—

"Far, far removed from want, from hope, from fear;
From all that teaches brotherhood to man;"

the sordid vices, the troublous passions, the abject pains of toiling, suffering humanity, undreamed of but as something to be relieved by drawing the strings of a silken purse, and speaking a few soft words in the softest voice; and in the midst of all this obeisance and formal etiquette, and emblazonments of ancestral glory, living probably in some retired part of the paternal palace a most simple life, wearing a plain muslin gown, and accustomed to a most frugal table. Thus she would grow up accomplished, innocent, alas! too —ignorant; her tenderness concentrated on few objects, her real nature little known, to herself least of all. From such a girlhood, the young Englishwoman of high rank emerges at once into a world of realities, and falls under the influence of an order of things which completes the formation of her character one way or another. Not so with our young German Princess. The transition with her is from one dream-world into another; she never quits the precincts of her father's court but to enter another and a similar circle of forms and ceremonies and representation, uniting all the unsubstantialness and glitter of a vision, with all the tedium and flatness of the flattest of worldly realities.

At the age of eighteen or twenty, a marriage is arranged for her with some neighbouring prince, whose alliance is considered advantageous. There is an exchange of embassies, proposals, pictures, letters, and the thing is settled. Marriages by proxy between parties who have never seen each other are less frequent than formerly, since it has become more the fashion for hereditary grand dukes and serene highnesses to travel about the world, and use at least a negative discretion in these matters: still they *do* take place. One of my best and kindest friends in Germany was a lady whose office it had been, in quality of Grande-maîtresse, to see a young and beautiful princess espoused by proxy, and conduct her afterwards from her imperial home to the court of her husband some thousand miles off.

But to return to the princess whose destinies we are following in fancy—the princess of our drama. Brought up in retirement,

surrounded by sentimental women whose education has been as confined as her own, all the fervour of her German imagination—all the fresh feelings of her young heart only waiting to be kindled and called forth, she consents to the marriage arranged for her as a matter of course, and, as a matter of course, probably falls in love with the *idéal* she has formed of her unseen husband. On reaching her new home, she sees the man to whom she has been given, the very opposite of all she had pictured him in fancy; or possibly finds him, as in the drama, devotedly attached to another, (and such was the fate of one of the loveliest and most accomplished among the princesses of Germany;) happy, however, if, where she meets weakness or indifference, she find not unworthiness also. Then comes the awakening, reluctant and slow; there is a wringing at the heart, a sharp, silent struggle, which, in the cherished pride of sex and of position, she hides from all, and with which, in her simplicity, she reproaches herself as with a crime hitherto unheard of and uncommitted; and then, if a weak passionate woman, she becomes miserable or profligate through all the usual gradations, and dies of *ennui;* but if, like the Princess of our drama, she be gifted, and high-minded, and high principled, she turns for consolation to pure and lofty sources: she patronises art, and does good as well as she may, —her best intentions and purposes still subject to practical error from the confined sphere and intense ignorance of humanity in which she has been educated: she takes a pride in gathering to her little court men distinguished in literature and science; she even obtains quietly and silently the upper hand in the government; for it is the inevitable law of God and nature, that where the *power* is, there will the *rule* be also, in spite of salique laws and any other laws.

Then she may have children, in whom she centres her pleasure and her pride; in educating them, she in a manner new educates herself. She cultivates the promising talents of her eldest son, the hereditary prince, or sees him in silent despair become like his father, weak and dissipated. Her younger sons enter the military

service of one of the great powers, Prussia or Austria, become captains or colonels, wearing rich uniforms and half a dozen orders, and spending a small paternal allowance in addition to their pay. The daughters of the Princess-Bride are brought up as their mother was before them: sighing, she sees them one after another depart from her to fulfil a destiny similar to her own; but without a suspicion that all this is not in the essential nature of things: and the once hopeful and feeling heart, and the once bright and aspiring mind. Subdued at last to the element in which she moves, she goes through her state and court duties, holds her *grand et petit cercle* with habitual grace and suppressed *ennui*, plays piquet every night with the prince, sees every day the same faces, and does and says every day the same things;—and so she dies, leaving behind her, perhaps, one favourite *Hofdame* to grieve for her, and the pensioners on her bounty to weep for her—or for their pensions,—and there an end! I do not say that this is the fate of all princesses: far from it; the picture might be infinitely varied; but it is the possible fate of many, and it is that, I am afraid, which awaits the charming Princess of our drama. This delineation of sweetness, intellect, dignity, innocence; of the pride of birth and high estate without mixture of vanity or selfishness; of perfect elegance of deportment, with a certain tincture of stateliness in the manner and phraseology, is altogether most charming in conception and finished in effect. As finished in its way is the character, or rather *no* character, of the Prince. Whether the authoress really intended him to appear as contemptible as I am afraid the reader will think him, I am not quite sure. He is good-natured, and not vicious; but weak in action and in passion, in doing and in suffering, yielding to every impulse, every suggestion; and if at length the good prevail over the bad,—the prudence and policy of Saldern over the selfish intrigues of Marwitz,—we feel that it is by mere chance and nothing else. In no one instance does he seem actuated by his own volition; and he talks perpetually, as the weak always do, of *destiny*, the *voice of the heart*, the *force of circumstances*.

The incident of his breaking open the letter addressed to another, we are, I suppose, to regard as a permitted act of princely authority, sanctioned by custom; or—what must we think of him?

Among the petty independent sovereigns of Germany there are six bearing the title of *Gross-Herzog*, Grand Duke; eight that of *Herzog*, Duke; eleven that of *Fürst*, which we translate Prince, having no other equivalent. One is *Kürfurst*, Elector; and one is *Landgraf*, Landgrave. The reigning princes and their immediate relations have the titles *Hoheit*, Highness, and *Durchlaucht*, Serene Highness. A grand duke is, I believe, *Königliche Hoheit*, Royal Highness. The immediate descendants of the grand-ducal families are in Germany properly styled Dukes and Duchesses; the others, Princes and Princesses. The sons and daughters of the mediatised Princes (*Fürsten*), are also Princes and Princesses.

Graf, which we translate Count, is said to be derived from *Grau*, gray-haired, the title given to the elders among the German tribes. The titles *Freyherr* (Free-lord), and *Freyfraü*, or *Freyin*, (Free-lady), we translate Baron and Baroness, having no other equivalent; but the Germans have both titles, with a distinction, that of *Freyherr* being more noble than that of *Baron*.

I have found it difficult to give appropriate English titles to the other dignified personages who figure in the drama; for some we have no exact equivalent in our English court.

Oberst-Hofmeisterin, the highest female office near the person of a Princess, I have rendered by the French title Grande-Maîtresse as more familiar to the English ear. She unites the duties of Mistress of the Robes and first Lady of the Bedchamber in the English court; the surveillance of the whole female establishment rests with her; she resides in the palace, attends the princess on all state occasions, and through her all introductions and presentations are made: she has the title of Excellency.

Hofdame I translate by lady of honour, properly, *Dame de la Cour*. *Hof-Fraülein* is Maid of Honour.

Count Saldern, as *Ober-Kammerherr*, holds an office which corresponds, I believe, with that of first Lord of the Bed-cham-

ber and Groom of the Stole, in our court; he has the title of Excellency.

I do not think we have any office corresponding exactly with that of *Hofmarschall*: it unites some of the duties of the Lord Chamberlain, with others of the Master of Horse, and Comptroller of the Household.

Marwitz is *Kammerherr*, Gentleman of the Prince's chamber, or, as we should say, Groom in Waiting.

A lady whom I knew in Germany, and who had been *Hofdame* in one of the German courts for many years of her life, expressed to me her unqualified surprise that, in this play, the Princess should arrive at her new capital attended by her own suite, and find no court already *monté* to receive her—that her Grande-Maîtresse should be on the eve of departure, and yet that we do not hear of any one appointed to fill her place. This violation of court-etiquette we may excuse, as the introduction of many mute and supernumerary personages would much encumber the action of the piece, and we may, without much fatigue of the imagination, suppose their existence, though we neither see nor hear of them.

Another court lady, when speaking of this play, expressed herself perfectly scandalized by the incident in the third act, where Marwitz intrudes into the presence of the Princess without the intervention of the Grande-Maîtresse. Such a violation of court etiquette seemed, in her eyes, to discredit the whole piece; "it was against all rules of probability and possibility, contrary to the nature of things, and how a Princess-authoress could be guilty of such an oversight was incomprehensible."

* * * * *

I am here reminded of one more allusion which cannot well be explained within the compass of a marginal note. In the fourth act the Princess declares her intention of seeking a temporary refuge in the "Convent of St. Mary on the Frontier," (Im Marienstifte an der Grenze). Now this "*Marienstift*," the most decorous and dignified asylum to which, under such circumstances, a Prin-

cess could retreat, is not precisely what we understand by a convent. The Damen-Stifter, or endowments for unmarried noble ladies, are in Germany so numerous, they form such an important, influential, and interesting characteristic of their complicate social system, and vary so much in their immunities, laws, appanages, and number of inmates in each, that I must defer the detailed account I still intend to give of these institutions, not being yet in possession of all the requisite notes to do justice to the subject. It must suffice for the present to explain in general terms that these *Damenstifter*, or *lay-convents*, exist both in the Protestant and Catholic countries of Germany, and have been endowed from the lands of suppressed convents, or by princely munificence, or by the heads of great families. In these last named, the ladies admitted must be related within certain degrees to the family of the founder. In some instances the inmates are elected by a chapter, in others the nomination rests with the sovereign, or in the choice of the superior or abbess: in almost all, a descent of unstained nobility is a first requisite; in *all*, want of fortune and celibacy are necessary qualifications; but no vows are necessary, and no restraint is exercised, only when a lady marries she vacates her place and privileges to another; neither is constant residence within the walls of the institution required, but merely for some months or weeks every year, and at the chapters held for the arrangement of the domestic affairs of the community. Some *Stifter* are poorly, and some magnificently endowed, having extensive landed estates, which are managed by a *Stiftsverweser*, *Curator*, or *Rentmeister*, always a married man of good family and unimpeachable character. The superior or abbess is generally elected by the sisterhood, the sovereign having in most cases a vote, or, at least I believe, a *veto*. Sometimes, but rarely, the nomination rests with the sovereign alone. In some of the *Stifter* the Superior possesses considerable power and responsibility, in others scarce any; she has generally the title of *Höchst-würdige Frau*, (most honourable lady). There is also generally a prioress and a deaconess, (*Prieurin* and *Dechantin*). The other ladies are

styled *Stifsdame*, (in French, *Chanoinesse;*) they vary in number from four or six to twenty and upwards. They frequently wear, when residing in their *Stift*, a particular costume, with a long white or black veil, and in full dress, on all occasions, a decoration or badge (*orden*) attached to a broad watered ribbon, blue, white, or crimson, suspended from the shoulder across the bosom or otherwise. It is very pretty, at a court ball in Germany, to see a number of noble girls thus decorated; one has at least the pleasant conviction that they will not be *obliged* to marry to secure a station in society—a refuge, a home; their order confers a certain dignity, besides an elegant maintenance; all of these, however, may not yet have arrived at the rank of Stiftsdame, they are perhaps only "Elect,"—*i.e.* have received from the abbess their decoration and *Expectanz Brief*, which gives them a right, in rotation, to the first vacancies which occur. It will sometimes happen that a noble lady may be placed on the list when ten years old, and not enter on her vocation till she is thirty, or more. In Stifter, where the ladies are elected, the vacancies are filled up as they occur.

It is easily conceivable that, in a country like Germany, where such strong social distinctions exist,—where alliances of unequal blood are still unfrequent,—where there is a numerous, a proud, and a poor nobility,—where the law of the *Majorât* centres the whole property of the family in the eldest son, leaving the younger sons and the daughters poor, and sometimes *very* poor, such institutions are most beneficial, and even necessary. I hope yet to receive accurate returns of the number of women attached to these endowed sisterhoods throughout Germany; they must amount to some hundreds.

I had several friends who were *Stiftsdamen*. One young friend of mine resided before her marriage in a splendid *Familien-Stift* in Bohemia, founded for sixteen noble ladies: she had her private apartments, consisting of three rooms, where she received her own visiters; her female attendant, and six hundred florins a year for pocket-money. There was an excellent table, a complete esta-

blishment of servants, including five liveried footmen, to attend the ladies when they walked out; there was no care, and less restraint than in the domestic home.

One of the most celebrated of these institutions is the Stift at Fulda.

I have heard but of two or three *Stifter* in which nobility of birth was not a necessary qualification. One of these, the *Georgs-Stift*, at Hildesheim in Hanover, was founded by King George IV. in 1829, for twelve daughters of men who had served the state in civil offices, without distinction of birth or religion.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

THE PRINCE.

THE PRINCESS MATILDA.

COUNT VON SALDERN, *Formerly the Prince's Tutor; now Minister.*

BARON VON MARWITZ.

COUNTESS VON THALHEIM, *Grande Maîtresse to the Princess.*

MATILDA VON WALLERBACH, *Maid of Honour to the Princess.*

MAJOR VON SOLLAU, *The Prince's Aide-de-camp.*

A VALET-DE-CHAMBRE *of the Prince.*

A VALET-DE-CHAMBRE *of the Princess.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN *of the court*, PAGES, SENTINELS, &c.

THE PRINCELY BRIDE.

ACT I.

Scene—*An Apartment in the Palace of the Prince.*

Count Saldern (*alone, a letter in his hand*).
I cannot conceive what my friend Steinau means with his absurd scruples and exaggerated caution: or—may there not possibly be more in the whole affair than he chooses me to understand? He is not a man to trouble himself without good cause, yet this letter reads as if he were anxious to exculpate himself on some particular point, and it makes me uneasy. It was his interest to bring about this marriage, and I

never before knew him to be particularly scrupulous in the use of means to attain his end. If I had but known of this secret embassy of the Baron von Marwitz!—yet I should not be much wiser, perhaps. The Prince has just reached that age when he no longer needs a tutor, and has not yet learned the value of an honest counsellor: and, after all, what could Marwitz himself, cunning as he is, have had to tell, except that the Princess is beautiful and amiable? for such she is in truth, or the whole world speaks false. I trust yet that all will be well, and that good fortune has this once only taken the bye-path to visit us. It would, however, be advisable to give Marwitz a hint that he may hold his tongue at least. The imagination of a young man is more to be considered, sometimes, than his heart, for once wounded it is more difficult to heal.

As he is going out, he meets the PRINCE *entering.*

PRINCE (*in a rapid joyful tone*).

Did you hear, Saldern? the first cannon has been fired! She is now in the capital—in *my* capital—her own! O that I could now hurry to the gates, mingle unseen among the shouting multitude, and hail her with a thousand welcomes from the full overflowing heart!

COUNT.

Your Highness knows that age has not yet rendered me incapable of sympathising with youth;—I share your joy.

PRINCE.

To be forced to wait her arrival here! to be chained down by formalities in such a moment—how intolerable! how provoking! O hateful despotism of court etiquette, which poisons every joy of our life, and pursues us even to the tomb! (*Sound of cannon at a distance.*) Hark! (*Bells ringing merrily.*) The bells, too! she is approaching. O bear my thanks to heaven, ye pious messengers of joy!—never till now did I feel your full significance! we grow devout when we are happy!

COUNT.

We are more likely to remain both devout and happy when we have steered clear of the delusions of youth: and here your choice is justified both by your understanding and your heart. A beautiful, intelligent, and amiable woman will content the wishes of reason; while not even an angel from heaven could fulfil the wild expectations of youthful fancy. Your Highness has seen the portrait of the Princess, your august bride?

PRINCE.

My bride—my wife! she is so—bound to me for ever, and indissolubly mine! A portrait, say you? what care I for a portrait?

COUNT (*smiling*).

Your highness were not surely the first young Prince who had endeavoured to trace in the features of his betrothed bride the qualities on which he was to depend for happiness.

PRINCE.

Her lovely features are the mirror of a mind more lovely; but were she even the reverse of beautiful—these letters—(*taking out a pocket-book*)—I will show them to her to-day, and swear to her that ever since they have been in my possession, they have been here—next my heart.

COUNT (*taking breath as if relieved*).

Your Highness, then, has fallen in love with the letters?

PRINCE.

My excellent, my paternal friend! I am too happy to conceal anything from you. My marriage with the Princess Matilda was the wish of my late father—of my people—and yours, my friend! the feuds of two neighbouring states were to be healed by this union. The fame of

Matilda's beauty and virtue inclined me to consent and to unite my fate with hers; but the idea of a marriage without love is not inviting at twenty. I wished to see the Princess before I decided irrevocably.

COUNT (*breathless*).

Well!

PRINCE.

And I *have* seen her.

COUNT (*alarmed*).

Seen her! where? how?

PRINCE.

In the house of the Hofmarschall von Steinau. Why do you look at me so anxiously? Is it a great misfortune that for once a marriage between princes should not be such a mere prosaic affair? I had been informed that the Princess occasionally visited the wife of the Hofmarschall,* who had formerly been her lady of honour; and on this I formed my plan. I gave Marwitz instructions to request of the Hofmarschall to contrive that he should meet the Princess at his house. After a good deal of difficulty, Steinau complied with the wish of my ambassador, on the condition that the meeting should have the appearance of accident, and

* *Hofmarschall*, which I have left untranslated, is properly the Comptroller-general of the royal household.

that Marwitz should conduct himself as if wholly ignorant of the rank of the lady he was to meet. I was then at my hunting palace on the frontiers. A letter from Marwitz summoned me to the Duke's capital: and on the evening of the same day he introduced me at the house of the Hofmarschall under the name of Count von Holm. There, in the domestic circle of her friend, I beheld my Matilda; and, after two hours spent in delightful converse, I rode home through the darkness of the night, all heaven in my exulting heart.

COUNT.

And did your Highness never refer to this interview in any of your letters to the Princess?

PRINCE.

And have thus destroyed wilfully the sweetest of my pleasures?—for, my dear Count, you know as yet only the half of my happiness! Matilda—I would not breathe it to another—but Count Holm apparently did not displease her.

COUNT.

Your Highness presumes then——

PRINCE.

My dear Saldern, suppose that her remembrance of Count Holm should not be quite effaced from her heart, and that to-day she should find a self-reproved, unacknowledged in-

clination not only justified, but hallowed in the sight of heaven.

COUNT (*aside*).

I have hardly the courage to disturb a joy so pure, so true; and yet I must—I must!

PRINCE.

You are silent: what is there to diplease you in all this? Do I not love *her*, whom it has become my duty to love?

Enter the BARON VON MARWITZ (*in haste*).

MARWITZ.

The carriage of the Princess has just driven into the palace court.

[*The shouts of the people are heard without.*

PRINCE.

I come, I come! Where are the rest of the gentlemen in waiting?

MARWITZ.

All assembled in the antechamber.

PRINCE.

Come, Count! Matilda! O, Matilda!

[*He is going.*

COUNT (*in the greatest anxiety*).

One word, your Highness!—a single word——

PRINCE.

Afterwards—at this moment I have no thought but for her. What blushes, what surprise, when

she—and I!—O was ever man born to such happiness! [*He hurries out.*

COUNT.

Baron! what have you done? After him, bring him back! I dread a scene.

MARWITZ.

I do not understand you.

COUNT.

The Prince believes that he has already seen the Princess. The Homfarschall has played you false, or you are yourself guilty of the most unpardonable imprudence. The lady whom you met at Steinau's house was not the Princess.

MARWITZ (*in terror*).

Then I am undone!

COUNT.

And not you alone; the Prince, too—his innocent bride!

MARWITZ.

They are coming! what shall I do? Allow me at least to convince you—to explain——

COUNT.

We shall have time enough to explain afterwards.

Enter the MAJOR VON SOLLAU.

Hurrah!* she is here at last! our fair young

* Glück auf!

Princess!* If it had not been for the guards, I believe the people would have borne her in their arms up the steps of the palace. Never did I behold our capital in such a state of excitement and enthusiasm.

COUNT.

And the Prince?

MAJOR.

The Prince! surprise and joy seemed to have deprived him both of thought and speech: when he gave his arm to her on alighting, he stood as if turned to stone—on my word, as pale as death; and then she brings a charming maid of honour with her, a lovely sparkling brunette:—you'll see her presently—the Master of the Household† has given her his arm.

COUNT (*aside*).

Good heavens! how is it all to end?

MARWITZ (*aside to the Count*).

My lord, for pity tell me how did this fatal communication reach you?

COUNT.

From the Hofmarschall himself!

MARWITZ.

Horrid—quite! If you only knew how he

* The Major does not give her in this place the title of *Prinzessin*, but that of *Fürstin*, which expresses the sovereignty.

† *Obersthofmeister.* The "first lord in waiting" would better express the office.

deceived me—how he contrived to persuade me —left me no doubt, in short, that all was right! But—but *I* am not responsible—I only obeyed the Prince's own command.

COUNT.

Be more composed—we are not alone!

MAJOR.

They are coming. Now, my lords, have you not some little curiosity?

COUNT.

Curiosity?—yes, by heaven!

[*They stand aside. Then enter guards, officers, and ladies of the court; then the Prince leading in the Princess, followed by the Countess von Thalheim, Matilda von Wallerbach, and attendants.*

PRINCE (*as if commanding himself, and speaking with effort*).

Your Highness may be assured that I think myself beyond measure fortunate to have the honour of introducing into my palace a lady so amiable, so universally beloved: my gratitude to his Highness, your illustrious father, can only end with my life.

PRINCESS.

These kind sentiments set my heart at ease, already touched by the manner in which I have been received in your city. Your people were

so enthusiastic!—and your Highness, methinks, must well deserve their love, or a stranger, who as yet has no claim to their good-will but the title of your bride, could hardly have met with such a cordial reception.

PRINCE.

I am glad my people have conducted themselves with the respect due to your Highness. (*Presenting the Count to her.*) My former tutor, now my grand chamberlain, Count von Saldern.*

PRINCESS.

I am happy to make the acquaintance of one whom I have so long held in respect. I come recommended to your kindness, my Lord Count, if you have received my father's letter.

COUNT (*bowing*).

Madam, his Highness was pleased to jest! —(*aside*)—and the jest, I fear, is likely to turn to earnest!

PRINCESS.

Your Highness will allow me to present to you the ladies of my court. My grande-maîtresse, the Countess von Thalheim.

* *Oberkämmerer:* "first lord of the bedchamber" would better express the office.

PRINCE.

Widow, I presume,* of the master-of-horse,* von Thalheim?

COUNTESS (*curtsying*).

My late husband had the honour, I believe, of being known to your Highness.

PRINCESS (*presenting her*).

The Lady Matilda von Wallerbach.

PRINCE (*starting as he sees her*).

Righteous heaven!

MATILDA (*aside*).

Whom do I see!

PRINCE.

What is the name of this lady?

PRINCESS.

The young Baroness von Wallerbach: your Highness, I believe, has never seen her before: she is here for the first time.

MATILDA (*to the Countess in a low voice*).

And this gentleman is really the Prince?

COUNTESS.

Do you not see—do you not hear that he is?

MATILDA.

I was only struck by a resemblance—but 'twas nothing.

* *Oberjägermeister:* properly "chief huntsman." It is one of the highest offices in a German court.

PRINCE (*who has overheard her*).

Perhaps the lady may remember a certain Count von Holm, who had once the honour of being introduced to her by the Hofmarschall von Steinau?—he is said to resemble me.

MATILDA (*with embarrassment*).

A little—yes—certainly; at the first glance—(*to the Princess*)—your Highness may remember I spoke to you of Count Holm?

PRINCE (*significantly*).

And he spoke to me of the Lady Matilda. I regret that he should be absent at this moment; but 'tis possible he may yet appear; meantime may I hope you have no intention of leaving us?

MATILDA.

That depends on her Highness's pleasure.

PRINCESS.

My good Countess Thalheim, I fear, cannot be persuaded to stay with us; but Lady Matilda will do me the favour to remain with me a few weeks, if your Highness approves.

PRINCE.

Most assuredly; it will be a pleasure to me, as well as to Count Holm. Your Highness must be a little fatigued after your journey: will you allow me to conduct you to your own apartment? (*To Matilda in a low voice.*) Matilda von Wal-

lerbach—that is your name?—I have much to say to you of Count Holm!

PRINCESS.

Come, my dear Thalheim!

[*She goes out, led by the Prince. The Countess, Lady Matilda, and the Major follow, and the rest disperse different ways. The Count and Marwitz are left alone.*

MARWITZ.

They are gone at last! I thought I never should have survived it! Now, my Lord Count, speak, for heaven's sake!

COUNT.

What do you want to know? You see too well how matters are!

MARWITZ.

What I have seen throws me into fresh perplexity; the pretty maid of honour who attends the Princess, she is the very person who——

COUNT.

Matilda von Wallerbach? Shall I read you the Hofmarschall's letter?

MARWITZ.

Do so, I beg! I am anxious to hear what he can say in his own defence.

COUNT (*takes out a letter and reads*).

"The unbounded confidence which I place in

your Excellency's prudence and character induces me to communicate to you a circumstance which, without some previous explanation, may possibly make me appear in a false light to yourself and your court."

MARWITZ.

No explanation will prevent *that*, I fancy.

COUNT (*continues*).

"A few weeks since, Baron von Marwitz, chamberlain* in the service of your Prince, visited our court. He passed several evenings at my house, made particular inquiries respecting our Princess, and at length begged of me, as the Princess now and then visited my wife, then confined by indisposition, to present him to her Highness. Your Excellency will conceive how utterly impossible it was for me to consent to a request so contrary to all etiquette; and I told the Baron distinctly that the Duke, her father, would never forgive me if I should thus compromise his daughter."

MARWITZ.

True; so he said at first; but as I gave him to understand that I should consider my mission at an end——

COUNT.

Listen. (*Reads.*) "It became the more ne-

* *Kammerherr*, gentleman of the chamber.

cessary to excuse myself, when I learned that he had met the Baroness Matilda von Wallerbach in my wife's evening circle, and had mistaken her for the Princess. As, according to report, Baron Marwitz and Count Holm appear to have been secret envoys from your Prince, and as Matilda von Wallerbach, in spite of all my endeavours to the contrary, accompanies the Princess by her Highness's desire, I must depend on your Excellency's known wisdom to take proper means to silence those who are privy to this affair, and thus prevent all injurious misunderstandings between the two courts."

MARWITZ.

Unheard-of audacity! What do you say to it? He will not acknowledge that he knows of my secret mission, and he ends by throwing the whole blame on me!

COUNT.

So it appears. Did you ever speak to him plainly with regard to your mission?

MARWITZ.

Plainly? — no; that was contrary to my orders; but——

COUNT.

My dear Baron, a statesman never listens to a *but*. And now tell me, did Steinau inform you in so many words that the lady you met at his house was the Princess?

MARWITZ.

Plague on't! no, he did not absolutely tell me so; but if you only heard the half expressions, the hints, the signs he made me——

COUNT.

A hint, a sign, cannot be proved in a court of justice; and half words are only understood by those to whom they are addressed. Baron, you may have acted like a man of honour, I do not deny it, but the blame rests on you notwithstanding.

MARWITZ.

'Tis enough to drive any one distracted!

COUNT.

Let us endeavour to forget what is past and not to be recalled; and think how we can redeem the future. I will go immediately to the Prince's cabinet, wait his return, and be the first to encounter that terrible contest—the strife of reason and honour against youth, power, and passion.

[*He goes out.*

MARWITZ.

Ay, you may go, and you may preach too, if you will—it won't do. As if we did not know the Prince! If it was about the building of a house, he would think he knew better than the mason;*

* This is a German phrase: Wenn es ein Haus zu baen galt, musste er Recht behalten gegen den Baumeister!

and will he listen to reason, and he over head and ears in love?—not he! The Hofmarschall Steinau has overreached me scandalously, and will laugh at me into the bargain; and in the whole affair I am certainly the most injured; and if I could only bring myself off with honour, I shouldn't much care about the rest—not I. To be sure, I pity the Princess; but, in the very worst case, she is still a Princess. As for the old Duke, he will fall into a passion, but he'll not declare war, I fancy.

Enter the PRINCE.

PRINCE.

'Tis well I find you here, Baron von Marwitz; can you conceive for what purpose they are playing this farce? There have I been seated this half hour between the supposed Princess and the supposed Lady Matilda, expecting at every moment to see them exchange characters, since I have confessed myself very intelligibly to be identical with the Count von Holm; but I wait in vain; each so fixedly, and with such self-possession, retained her disguise, that to end the painful, embarrassing scene at once, I took my leave, requesting permission to repeat my visit.

MARWITZ (*in the greatest embarrassment*).

Your Highness's pardon; but I did not quite understand——

PRINCE.

You have not seen the Princess, then?

MARWITZ.

The Princess? O yes—certainly; but your Highness spoke of a farce?

PRINCE.

If the Princess is here under the name of her own lady of honour?——

MARWITZ.

Does then your Highness think it?—hope it? O would to heaven it were so!

PRINCE.

Well, sir?

MARWITZ.

The Hofmarschall has betrayed us—has played us false—false! The farce is played out, and what your Highness sees, is—reality!

PRINCE (*turning pale*).

Then the object of my admiration—my love, was——

MARWITZ.

Matilda von Wallerbach.

PRINCE (*eagerly*).

How do you know that?

MARWITZ.

From a letter of the Hofmarschall to Count von Saldern.

PRINCE.

Woe to the Marshall if you speak truth—it shall be the worse for him and for others too! I am human, and may be deceived, but unrevenged—never!

MARWITZ.

I am innocent, my most gracious lord!

PRINCE.

We shall see, sir; that remains to be proved: meantime, even though you be no traitor, yet are you the most negligent and most clumsy of negociators, and you are henceforth dismissed from my service.

MARWITZ (*respectfully but impressively*).

Your Highness will permit me, on taking leave, to bequeath to my colleagues one piece of advice—to obey only the written commands of their Prince. I would give a great deal, had I followed this principle myself.

PRINCE.

Audacious too!—like all who feel they have no longer aught at stake! Leave me! (*Marwitz retires a few paces.*) And hark ye, sir! Write to your Baron von Steinau—tell him that since

he has introduced the Baroness Matilda to me as my bride, he must be silent, ay, and know how to silence his court, if I make her my wife.

MARWITZ.

Certainly.

PRINCE (*with increasing vehemence*).

I shall follow the impulse of my heart! Who has the right to censure my actions—who?

MARWITZ.

No one, my gracious lord.

PRINCE.

Matilda von Wallerbach loves me—I love her. Every private individual has the privilege of sharing his fate with the woman he loves; why is it denied to princes?

MARWITZ.

May I inform the Baroness of your Highness's sentiments towards her?

PRINCE.

You may so; but be prudent.

MARWITZ.

The Grand Chamberlain, Count Saldern, awaits your Highness in your cabinet.

PRINCE.

Good; I'am glad to know that, for I will not see him now. Confess, Marwitz, that he intends to read me a lecture—ha? O that these moralists of sixty could but be twenty once more in

their lives!—they would not deal so hardly with us. Well, my philosopher must have patience; —I will take a turn in the open air.

[*He goes out.*

MARWITZ.

I am in a strange position. Is it advisable to encourage the Prince's passion? or shall I act in opposition to it? In that case, his Highness must put up with his affianced bride; Matilda von Wallerbach will be sent off; we shall be all left in peace and good will, and the Hofmarschall will laugh at me in his sleeve!—no, it shall not be! If, on the contrary, I take the beaten path in such matters, we may possibly have a hurricane; but Steinau will be disgraced, and I remain the Prince's favourite. The first suggestion is the best—I adhere to it; they shall know what it is to have made a fool of the Baron von Marwitz. [*He goes out.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE—*The Apartment of the Baroness Matilda.*

MATILDA *and* MAJOR VON SOLLAU *seated.*

MAJOR.

I am indeed most grateful for the honour your ladyship has done me in acknowledging me here at court. Travelling acquaintances are generally mere strangers the moment a lady steps out of the carriage.

MATILDA.

As our partners are the morning after a ball; but we make exceptions in both cases.

MAJOR.

Then, at least, you do not confound me with the mass?

MATILDA (*playfully*).

Did you not take most paternal care of me whenever we stopped to dine or sup?

MAJOR.

You jest, dear madam; and you are in the right, for it well becomes your beauty. Yet I came here for the sole purpose of speaking a few serious words with you.

MATILDA.

Serious?—you alarm me!

MAJOR.

I came to—to ask your advice.

MATILDA.

A gentleman? and ask advice from a lady? that certainly elevates you in my estimation, for it raises me in my own. Let me hear, then.

MAJOR.

I wish to learn of you what I shall do to become a happy man.

MATILDA.

Fancy yourself so: I know no better means.

MAJOR.

I doubt whether my fancy can reach so far.

MATILDA.

Nay, be not offended; I do not exactly know what your position may be; but I presume it depends on yourself to be happy; you are young,

rich, are esteemed in your profession, well looking—what would you more?

MAJOR (*significantly*).

You ask me?

MATILDA (*looking down*).

The question is natural, methinks.

MAJOR.

And can a woman, young and charming, conceive a happiness with which the heart has nothing to do?

MATILDA.

A man possessed of your advantages can hardly fail to please our sex.

MAJOR.

That is just what I was about to ask. Would it be a proof of self-conceit if I held it not impossible to win the real love of a noble maiden, who never, never should repent having united her lot with mine?

MATILDA.

Then to complete your happiness you want——

MAJOR (*with animation and emphasis*).

An amiable companion for life. Do you think I shall ever find such a one? Do you consider me as one with whom a woman might venture her happiness?

MATILDA.

No woman but would deem herself honoured

by your proposals, and few, I think, would reject them.

MAJOR.

Few! but some, you imagine;—and if among them were the only woman I could ever think of?

MATILDA.

You have then already made your choice?

MAJOR.

Suppose I had made it; and that the object of my love resembled in mind, and heart, and charms, the Lady Matilda,—do you believe that she would belong to the few you allude to?

MATILDA (*blushing*).

I think——

MAJOR (*seizing her hand*),

Not!

MATILDA (*in a low voice*).

I think not.

MAJOR (*kisses her hand*).

Victoria! I am now assured of all I wished to know.

MATILDA.

Major!

MAJOR (*listening*).

I hear steps—some *mal-apropos* visit, which will oblige me to leave you; but I carry with me a *no*, sweeter than the sweetest *yes* that ever blessed a lover's ear.

MATILDA.

We must speak farther,

MAJOR.

Farther—as much as you please; but not otherwise than you have spoken. Pray dismiss your visiter as soon as possible, for I will not promise to absent myself long.

[*He kisses her hand, and exit.*

MATILDA.

He appears to be in earnest—to have serious intentions, and I—I am afraid I have gone too far, unless I can make up my mind to marry him. Marry! the thought frightens me—yet that must come at last. The Major is an estimable and an agreeable man; and a suitable marriage would release me at once from the painful position in which I stand with regard to the Prince—a position which threatens at once my peace and my good name.

Enter MARWITZ.

MARWITZ.

All alone, fairest lady?

MATILDA (*playfully*).

How do you know but that I am surrounded by spirits?

MARWITZ.

Cupids they must be.

MATILDA.

Cupids, then!—why not?—they were no bad company!

MARWITZ (*significantly*).

I know one who finds them but too intolerable.

MATILDA.

His own fault, then: Cupids are like charming children when properly kept in order; but the most misbehaved set of spoiled imps when once you give them the rein.

MARWITZ.

You think, then, that love depends on our own will?

MATILDA.

Surely: I should like to see who could force me to love *against* my will!

MARWITZ.

For all that, Cupid plays strange tricks with the human heart. I could mention one of my friends as a particular instance. Your ladyship may remember a young and handsome man who accompanied me on a visit to the Baroness Steinau? A certain Count von Holm?

MATILDA.

No, Baron von Marwitz, I know nothing of that person—at least I will not suffer him to be mentioned in my presence.

MARWITZ.

Your heart is perhaps engaged elsewhere?

MATILDA.

The state of my heart has nothing to do with the matter.

MARWITZ.

That Count von Holm entertains a serious passion for you is true, I can assure you.

MATILDA.

So much the worse.

MARWITZ.

Is it then so impossible that you should return his love?

MATILDA (*haughtily*).

For what do you take me, sir?

MARWITZ.

I see I must speak more plainly, or be misunderstood. You are now acquainted with the real position and character of the person who was presented to you as Count Holm?

MATILDA.

Yes—and therefore the more it becomes me to reject——

MARWITZ.

Pray do not interrupt me.

MATILDA.

I will hear no more!

MARWITZ.

The nuptials appointed for this evening *may* be omitted, and the marriage by proxy *may* be annulled.

MATILDA (*agitated*).

What do you mean? you frighten me!

MARWITZ.

I have just received the Prince's orders to countermand the ceremony.

MATILDA.

Good heavens! and our Duke?

MARWITZ.

Is referred to his Hofmarschall Steinau.

MATILDA.

And the Princess?

MARWITZ.

Can return home and tell them what she thinks of our court.

MATILDA.

Do you speak seriously?—no, it were too monstrous!—no, it is impossible!

MARWITZ.

Love disclaims the word!

MATILDA.

Such a breach of faith——

MARWITZ.

What breach of faith? and to whom?—your

Duke! who first presented to the Prince the Lady Matilda as his affianced bride, and now would force his own daughter on him in her stead?

MATILDA.

And did the Duke know of this affair?

MARWITZ.

Is the Hofmarschall mad, think you?—for mad he must be, to venture such a step without the knowledge of his sovereign. One word from your lips, and you attain that height which was in insolent mockery set before you, while those who would have deceived you are themselves the deceived.

MATILDA.

And the Prince is then really determined——

MARWITZ.

To lay his heart at your feet. Give me one word of encouragement for the Prince, and leave to us the care of your reputation. We will so arrange matters that the Princess shall be the first to break off: she will then return to her native country; you will accompany her, if you wish it; at a proper time you will find some excuse for resigning your place at court; the Prince will make a journey and meet the Lady Matilda somewhere by accident; your acquaintance will have the appearance of being quite new, and no one

will reproach the lovely maid of honour, if she seize on a jewel which her Princess cast away.

MATILDA.

If I could only believe you! you make me giddy—go! leave me!

MARWITZ.

But if I swear to you that all shall be as I say——

MATILDA.

There would still remain an insurmountable obstacle—my own conscience. Think you it is allowable to injure thus a Princess under whose protection I am placed?

MARWITZ.

So! conscientious scruples? but even these I can satisfy, by assuring you, that, independently of his love for you, the Prince has conceived such an aversion for the Princess, that he is resolved in every case to abandon the idea of these nuptials.

MATILDA (*hesitating.*)

Were I but convinced of that!

MARWITZ.

You may believe me: and, between ourselves, do you really think the Prince so much in the wrong? The Princess has little beauty, less talent; is cold in manner—the very antipodes, in short, of your fair self. Were it not better for

the Princess to purchase freedom by present and transient vexation, than to live through a whole life in the bonds of an unhappy marriage?

MATILDA.

Better—perhaps; but is it so in her own opinion? You know little, Baron von Marwitz, of the female heart; we women can endure much, very much, as long as our dignity is maintained in the eyes of the world.

MARWITZ.

It may be so—but we have nothing more to do with the Princess's wishes or opinions:—if you knew how fervently the Prince loves you, you would not send me hence without a word.

MATILDA.

What is it you require of me?

MARWITZ.

A simple yes or no;—without one or the other, I cannot leave you.

MATILDA.

And if I merely desire you to leave me?

MARWITZ.

Ha! I understand—I have my answer.

[*He bows low—and goes towards the door.*

MATILDA.

Baron von Marwitz!

MARWITZ.

Lady!

MATILDA.

You are sure the separation of the Prince and Princess is not to be avoided?

MARWITZ.

As the Prince has already countermanded the nuptial ceremony, the decisive step is taken, and is not to be recalled.

MATILDA.

And he asks——

MARWITZ.

He only asks to be allowed to hope!—may he?

MATILDA.

Tell him—but only in case that his decision with regard to the Princess is not to be altered—that—that——

MARWITZ.

That your heart is not absolutely indifferent to him?

MATILDA.

O whither would you lead me?

MARWITZ.

To a throne!*

[*He kisses her hand respectfully, and goes out.*

* The German idiom is not easily rendered. "Was machen Sie aus mir?"—"Eine Fürstin!"

MATILDA (*looks after him breathless—then sinks into a chair—after a pause.*)

What have I done?—placed my fair name, my peace, my well-being, in the power of this vain babbling coxcomb, who may hold me up to the sneers of the world? I must anticipate him, and by some decided step silence scandal. Yet if he has been really commanded by the Prince to speak to me on this subject? I were no woman if I did not see that the Prince loves me:—well, let things take their course; nothing is lost in that case. [*She goes out.*

The scene changes to the apartment of the Princess.

THE PRINCESS—THE COUNTESS VON THALHEIM.

COUNTESS.

His Highness, methinks, is not very punctual to his appointment.

PRINCESS.

So much the better, dear Thalheim; the idea of this interview makes me anxious. I need a few minutes to collect myself.

COUNTESS.

Yet, during our journey, your Highness seemed so firm, so composed, so cheerful.

PRINCESS.

The letters of the Prince had inspired me with

a feeling of confidence and security. While at a distance, he was to me an acquaintance, a friend; now that I have seen him, he is to me as a stranger. O there is a wide distinction between writing and speaking—the pen is often more eloquent than the tongue!

COUNTESS.

I lament, inexpressibly, that my family affairs oblige me to set off to-morrow; is it still your Highness's intention to retain the Lady Matilda in your suite?

PRINCESS (*repressing her emotion*).

That, I believe, was settled long ago.

COUNTESS.

Your Highness is aware that it was from regard to the old Baroness—Lady Matilda's aunt—that I recommended her to your service; but I cannot say that she has fulfilled my expectations.

PRINCESS.

How so? she appears to me an amiable girl—accomplished—lively——

COUNTESS.

And a coquette. Did she not contrive, in the course of our two days' journey, so to turn the head of poor Major von Sollau, that I doubt whether it will ever come round to its right place again?

PRINCESS (*forcing a smile*).

Is it a crime to please?

COUNTESS.

She who aims at pleasing universally, will sometimes please where she ought not: as to the major, I think little about him, and she might lead half the city in triumph at her chariot wheels, for what I care, provided that she acted with integrity as regards your Highness.

PRINCESS.

I know too little of her as yet, to have any claim on her confidence.

COUNTESS.

I wish your Highness did not understand me; but I fear you only *will* not.

PRINCESS.

Hark! some one comes—see who it is, dear Countess!

COUNTESS.

The Prince! the Prince!—be but composed—all will be well: forget what I have said!—

[*The Princess looks up to heaven for a moment—then commanding herself, by a strong effort, she moves towards the door.*

Enter the PRINCE; *he bows with a mixture of ill-humour and embarrassment, and, after a pause, speaks in a cold distant tone.*

PRINCE.

I hope your Highness has recovered the fatigue of your journey?

PRINCESS.

We travelled both days such easy stages, that, in truth, I hardly need repose.

[*She takes a chair—the Prince, on a sign from her, takes another, and the Countess von Thalheim seats herself at some little distance.*

PRINCE (*after a pause*).

I trust you left the duke, your illustrious father, in good health?

PRINCESS.

Quite well; a little sad, 'tis true; at his age, partings are hard to bear.

PRINCE.

Nor, methinks, could it have been indifferent to your Highness to be separated from a family so beloved and so much attached to you.

PRINCESS.

Were that possible, I should indeed be unworthy of your esteem.

PRINCE.

It must be confessed that the customs of society are particularly tyrannical with respect to the daughters of princes: it has been rendered impossible for you to follow the highest vocation of your sex, without tearing asunder the tenderest bonds of your childhood.

PRINCESS.

Self-denial is the peculiar virtue of woman; and it seems intended that in this also we should show an example to the rest of our sex.

PRINCE.

It is requiring far too much, methinks; for what is offered to you in return for kindred, friends, and country? A man who does not know you—and who is to you unknown!

PRINCESS.

During my journey hither, I read your letters over again and again: they were dictated, I thought, by a noble and a feeling heart. To such a one my father confided my fate—to such a one I believed I might myself confide it. If my appearance does not equal the portrait your imagination had formed of me, I am tranquillised by the reflection that, at least, my character and my heart have been made known to you, as they really are. If there is anything in my deportment you would wish otherwise, I hope you will

tell me so freely. You shall be henceforth my instructor, my best friend—my only defender, counsellor, comforter, in this foreign land! and if the first impression has somewhat disturbed the exalted and perhaps poetical idea you had formed of your unseen bride—yet may I not hope that a calmer, and therefore a more constant affection, may in time unite us for ever?

PRINCE (*with emotion*).

I do not merit so much goodness! (*aside*)—In truth, a rare creature!*

PRINCESS.

I am now orphaned—homeless—and must look to you for my all of earthly happiness: the command of a father banished me from the circle of my home, and sent me to you, alone, a timid, unlessoned girl; but I obeyed with confidence, even while I looked back with regret on all I left behind: for you had invited me with tenderest words, which gave me the promise of as tender a heart. To that heart I will trust—much—much more than to the flatteries of a bridegroom. You will fulfil your vows, and not render for ever miserable the being, who, in accordance with your own wish, has forsaken all she possessed for your sake.

PRINCE (*embarrassed, yet with softness*).

Miserable!—you?—do you then believe me

* Ein seltenes weibliches Wesen!

capable?—forgive me, Princess, if your first reception—if you knew all——

PRINCESS.

Knew what? explain yourself.

PRINCE.

You are displeased; you blame me in your heart, and think me unkind—insensible——

PRINCESS.

Why so? because I find you true?—because at our first meeting you laid aside all those common places of gallantry with which the heart has nothing to do?

PRINCE.

You prize truth, then?

PRINCESS.

Above all things I prize it!

PRINCE (*much agitated*).

Would I could prevail on myself — perhaps you would be of the same opinion in the end: at least it shall be entirely left to your own decision. My esteem, my respect, my admiration, you cannot for a moment doubt—— (*stops abruptly.*)

PRINCESS.

Speak on, I entreat!

PRINCE.

Yes;—what was it I was going to say? I have forgotten—nothing of any importance, for the

present. Your Highness will excuse me. I regret I must take my leave—my minister expects me in my cabinet. I shall have the honour of waiting on your Highness to conduct you to dinner.

[*He kisses her hand—goes to the door, and meets Matilda coming in. He bows to her in visible confusion, and goes out. The Princess stands looking after him in silence.*

COUNTESS.

Very extraordinary! And pray what brings *you* here, Lady Matilda?

MATILDA.

My visit was not to your excellency. I wished to speak to the Princess.

PRINCESS.

In what can I serve you?

MATILDA.

Your Highness had the condescension to take me into your service for an indefinite period—

PRINCESS.

Yes—and I think in that we were agreed.

MATILDA.

So much the more painful do I feel it now, to be obliged to entreat my dismission.*

* *Dismission* does not exactly express the meaning of Entlassung, which is the courtly phrase on these occasions for permission to depart or resign.

PRINCESS.

Your dismission? what has caused this sudden change?

MATILDA.

May it please your Highness, a letter from my aunt, which I have just received.

PRINCESS.

Where is this letter? may I be allowed to look at it?

MATILDA (*embarrassed*).

I left it in my room, and it contains, besides, only family affairs——

PRINCESS.

Which I have no desire whatever to know.

COUNTESS.

If your Highness thinks proper, I hope the Lady Matilda will accept a seat in my carriage. She may thus commence her journey homewards to-morrow morning.

MATILDA.

To-morrow! I am not prepared——

COUNTESS.

O never mind your preparations! I will send you my femme-de-chambre, and will help you myself, if need be.

PRINCESS (*looking at Matilda affectionately*).

Matilda! (*Aside.*) I guess the truth—she loves him! she would fly from danger, and I dare not

even attempt to detain her. (*Aloud.*) Your society in this new country had been more than ever precious to me; but since duty recalls you, I will not be the cause of your disobeying its command. You will accept the Countess's offer, and take with you my esteem and my friendship. [*She embraces Matilda, and goes out.*

COUNTESS.

To-morrow morning punctually at eight—and you shall have the best place in my landau.

MATILDA.

The Princess seems in infinite haste to dismiss her suite,—or has my request offended her, that she has been so prompt in granting it? When I mentioned my aunt's letter, I did not mean to say that my family could not wait my return for another week.

COUNTESS.

And are you sure in a week hence to find such another opportunity of travelling under the protection becoming your age and rank? The Princess is good—too good! but she can see sometimes what she would rather not see. Go, my dear Lady Matilda—be ready by to-morrow. Depend upon me for a pleasant travelling companion. Your request to return home was, I do believe, heaven-inspired!

[*She goes out.*

MATILDA.

Dismissed! at the first word—without even the common civilities!—turned out of doors as if I were a criminal! The Princess must think me uncommonly magnanimous if, after such treatment, she depends on my consideration for her—or does she think herself so sure of her position? Marwitz has not sent, and the Prince, as he passed, had scarcely courage to salute me. But let things be as they may, I will not go back with Countess Thalheim. Would not every one suspect there must be some cause of reproach against me, when they see me sent home after five days' absence? I see I have rushed into a dilemma—from it I shall find it difficult to extricate myself. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE—*A state-room in the Princess's suite of apartments.*

Enter the PRINCE—*then a* VALET DE CHAMBRE.

PRINCE (*calling*).

No one in the anteroom!

VALET DE CHAMBRE (*entering*).

Your Highness's commands?

PRINCE.

Is the Princess in her chamber?

VALET DE CHAMBRE.

Her Highness has just stepped out on the terrace, but I will immediately announce to the Grande Maîtresse——

PRINCE.

It is of no consequence: do not disturb her—I will wait. [*The Valet de Chambre goes out.*

PRINCE (*walks thoughtfully to and fro—then speaks*).

I felt so resolved when I left my room, and, now I am on the spot, I feel my courage grow less and less every moment. (*He looks at his watch.*) Three o'clock: only five hours before the time appointed for the ceremony! I can delay no longer. Poor Matilda! her confession to Marwitz was not necessary to make me sure of her heart. And even if it were right and honourable to sacrifice my own feelings to political views, it is not allowable to outrage hers. (*He opens a window and looks out—after a pause.*) She comes not yet! I think that if I placed the affair before her in its true light, and appealed to her magnanimity, we might possibly agree upon a means to secure her dignity on all important points: joyfully would I subscribe to any conditions to preserve her peace, her honour! Courage! in one hour hence all is settled! but when it is so—shall I feel myself as happy as I once hoped to be?

[*He leans against the window, lost in thought. Enter the* COUNT, *unseen by the Prince.*

COUNT (*aside*).

The Prince and his Marwitz lose no time: the nuptials already countermanded!—I hope it will not reach the public ear. There he stands: O unblest power of passion! How is he now tormenting his brain, tasking every faculty of thought to find means to rid himself of the jewel in his possession, and exchange it for the counterfeit stone! (*Aloud.*) Pardon, your Highness——

PRINCE (*starting*).

Who is there? You, my dear Count? You sought me this morning, I hear; tell me quick what is your business with me; for I am at this moment waiting the arrival of the Princess.

COUNT.

Of the Princess?

PRINCE.

The Princess; I have to speak to her on matters of the deepest importance.

COUNT (*anxiously*).

Your Highness——

PRINCE.

I esteem, I revere her, and will act in all things as a man of honour—that I swear to you! but in what concerns my own feelings I will listen to no one; and those that think to persuade me, will lose both time and trouble.

COUNT.

I merely came to ask your Highness whether the court is to assemble this evening in the grand saloon, or here?

PRINCE.

Time enough for that, my dear Count.

COUNT.

I would not willingly trouble your Highness again about such a trifle, and I am beset by inquirers——

PRINCE.

Then tell them their appearance is dispensed with; that the intended ceremony will not take place—at least not to-day.

COUNT.

Impossible! Does your Highness consider the effect which the postponement of such an important ceremony will produce on the public mind?

PRINCE.

Neither is it my intention that the matter should be *only* postponed. Do you understand me? Now you know all; and I beg of you, as you value my friendship, not a word more on the subject.

COUNT (*after a pause*).

Does the Princess know of your determination?

PRINCE.

Not yet; she shall be made acquainted with it immediately. I hope to find her more reasonably acquiescent than my Mentor.

COUNT.

More indulgent, more forbearing,—'tis very possible; a truly noble woman may be persuaded to the sacrifice of her own dearest interests, rather than wrong the confidence even of a stranger.

PRINCE.

If I am divorced from the Princess, it shall be so arranged that she will lose nothing in the public estimation: the blame will rest on me alone.

COUNT (*coldly*).

Allow me to observe that your Highness is not the best judge in such an affair: it can do you little harm; the public censure and wonder are exhausted in a few days, and in a few weeks you will be again the all-be-praised and honoured sovereign: even to-day's breach of faith will be remembered only to be excused, while an ineffaceable blot is attached to the name of your innocent and transiently-pitied bride, for ever!

PRINCE.

But if she acknowledges herself——

COUNT.

What has she to acknowledge ?—that, contrary to her father's will, she has resisted this marriage ? or that she finds herself under the necessity of giving place to one deemed more worthy? In the first case, she will be censured universally; in the second, she will be the object of a sort of compassion more degrading to a woman—more difficult to bear, than censure itself.

PRINCE.

We may find a middle course: I have a brother——

COUNT.

A youth of seventeen!

PRINCE.

Leave me, Count! I have every confidence in you; but in the position in which I am now placed, I can take counsel of myself alone. The affair can no longer be placed on the former footing. I have countermanded the ceremony, and have thus given a public demonstration of my feelings and intentions. Say no more!

COUNT.

Your Highness need not fear me.

[*He goes out.*

PRINCE.

This, then, is the day to which I looked forward with such joyful anticipations. It has in-

deed held its promise to me in one respect; I have found her whom I love; I have the power to make her mine; but my peace is not the less destroyed for ever. My heart whispers that, whichever way I decide, there is no happiness for me—none!

Enter MATILDA.

PRINCE (*aside on seeing her*).

Matilda! Is her appearance the reply to that question which mine own heart dared not answer?

[*Matilda curtsies, and passes on to the door of the Princess's room.*

Lady Matilda?

MATILDA (*hurriedly, and then passing on*).

Your Highness will excuse me!

PRINCE.

Why seek to avoid me?

MATILDA.

And if—if—have I not reason? The transient notice with which your Highness has been pleased to honour me, is like to cost me but too dear!

PRINCE.

How so? Has any one here dared to offend you?

MATILDA.

An insignificant person like myself is not offended, but crushed at once. What signifies it

to a princess whether Matilda von Wallerbach be esteemed by the world, or held up to the world's scorn? Your Highness will allow me to take my leave at once—(*curtsying*).

PRINCE.

What am I to understand by this?

MATILDA.

Has your Highness any commands to our court? I set off to-morrow with the Countess von Thalheim.

PRINCE.

To-morrow?—impossible!—it must not be—it will give occasion to remarks—

MATILDA.

I must—I am so commanded!

PRINCE.

Commanded?—by whom?—by the Princess?

MATILDA.

I am under her protection, and would, in obedience to her wish, go anywhere without a murmur, if my reputation were not endangered by a sentence of banishment—so abrupt—so inexplicable: I should have thought my conduct since my arrival here merited more consideration.

PRINCE.

With what do they presume to reproach you?

MATILDA.

With nothing; and in the eyes of those who

bear me ill will, that is worse, perhaps, than anything more definite. Ah! did princes know what injury may be done to a poor, unsuspecting girl by merely a glance—a smile—an expression of kindness—they would keep better guard over their very looks. But pardon me, I do not upbraid your Highness—farewell! May you be happy!—(*she takes out her handkerchief.*)

PRINCE.

And did you not appeal against this injustice?

MATILDA.

I wished to venture some remonstrance, but could not obtain a hearing.

PRINCE.

Abominable!

MATILDA.

The Princess, after my dismission, retired before I could think of a reply, and left the Grande Maîtresse to receive my answer.

PRINCE (*aside*).

There, Saldern, my wise Mentor! There's the gentle, the magnanimous Princess for you, who would rather trample another's happiness under her feet, than allow the world to suppose that another could be preferred before her! O, it is an enduring truth—the voice of the heart is the voice of heaven. Have you spoken with Marwitz?

MATILDA.

Did your Highness know then?—— alas! I fear that this unfortunate interview is the real cause of all that has since befallen me.

PRINCE.

I shall take good care to secure you from all further annoyance: the time, I trust, is not far distant when I shall be allowed to explain myself, without offending either duty or form.

MATILDA.

Your Highness!

PRINCE (*seizes her hand*).

Rest assured of one thing——

MATILDA (*breaking from him*).

Some one approaches—it is the Princess!—in pity let me go! [*She hurries out*

The PRINCESS, *entering, speaks to an attendant, to whom she gives a bonnet she held in her hand.*

PRINCESS.

Say nothing to the Countess: I will not have her disturbed from her siesta. (*Seeing the Prince.*) You here, my dear Prince? I have not kept you waiting, I hope; I should regret——

PRINCE (*stiffly*).

Your Highness is too condescending. I can assure you I have not found the time long—not

in the least; for I have heard much in the interval that is both new and surprising, and, among other things, one piece of information, of which I must beg some explanation from your Highness.

PRINCESS.

From me?

PRINCE.

It is said that the young Baroness von Wallerbach is to leave us to-morrow?

PRINCESS.

Possibly——

PRINCE.

Possibly?—you do not know of it then? and yet it is said to be by your own command.

PRINCESS.

With my consent, at least.

PRINCE.

To the prejudice, not less than the deep regret, of that young lady?

PRINCESS.

On the contrary, it is the young lady's own wish and request.

PRINCE (*drily*).

Indeed!—your Highness must excuse me if I entertain some doubts.

PRINCESS.

I have spoken to the Lady Matilda myself.

PRINCE.

You spoke to her?—without any attempt to detain her—without explaining to her the ambiguous light in which so rash a step would place her in the eyes of the world? Pardon me, your Highness assured me this morning that you prized sincerity above all things, and I cannot deny that such conduct towards the young lady surprises me.

PRINCESS.

I beg your Highness will leave to a woman the guardianship of a woman's fair fame: we are the best judges in such cases.

PRINCE.

I suspect there are certain circumstances in which the fate of one woman can hardly be trusted with safety in the hands of another.

PRINCESS.

It may be so; but I at least know of none.

PRINCE.

You have been prejudiced against this young lady.

PRINCESS.

I do not understand your Highness.

PRINCE.

Then I must take the liberty of saying, that I wish to have a stranger who visits my court treated with due respect.

PRINCESS.

I am most sensible of your consideration for my countrywoman.

PRINCE.

And that I cannot allow, that, on the very day of her arrival, the door of my palace should be closed against her.

PRINCESS.

Your Highness is so far right: it is *not* well; and I had fixed Matilda's departure for to-morrow, merely because, for a young woman of her rank in society, I thought my Grande-maîtresse the most suitable chaperone. I have since understood that the wife of our ambassador will return home in about a week, on a visit to her relations, and I have left it in Lady Matilda's own choice to go with her, or to go to-morow: she will find my note in her room.

PRINCE (*with increasing anger*).

Sent off at one moment—detained the next! I see the young lady is no favourite; but it shall depend on herself how long she will endure such treatment; and the moment she chooses to be released from this dependence——

PRINCESS.

She will not choose it: and if she would, she *cannot*. Matilda was confided to me by her relations. I have tacitly pledged myself to restore

her to her home, unspotted in name, and uncorrupted in heart; and this duty I will fulfil, though it should cost me my peace—my happiness—my life! [*She goes out*

PRINCE (*looks after her—a pause*).

I know not how she contrives it; but thus does she ever find means to silence me! I was in the very humour to let her know my mind—and now the moment is past. Psha! Marwitz is in the anteroom: I will leave it to him to make an end. [*Exit.*

SCENE—*The Princess's private Apartment. Enter the* PRINCESS, *pale and agitated.*

PRINCESS.

How was it all? what has happened? and where shall I ever find the fortitude to endure this cruel position? Merciful Heaven! and this is the man on whom I had depended for peace and happiness—who vowed to make me forget, for his sake, parents, friends, and fatherland? What has become of that noble heart which I fancied I traced in all his letters? O my poor father! did you but know to what you have exposed your daughter!—she who would so willingly have spent her days by your side! O may you never know it! I will arm myself in strength and patience;—I will fulfil my duty, be it ever so painful: there will come a day of retribution!

Enter a VALET-DE-CHAMBRE.

VALET-DE-CHAMBRE.

May it please your Highness, the Baron von Marwitz.

PRINCESS (*starts in surprise, but immediately commands herself*).

Show him in. [*Exit* VALET-DE-CHAMBRE.

PRINCESS.

Marwitz?—at such a moment?

MARWITZ (*appears at the door*).

Will your Highness permit me?

PRINCESS (*with dignity*).

You may approach, Baron von Marwitz.

MARWITZ (*aside*).

What shall I say? It were best to appeal to sentiment and magnanimity—that is sure to take effect with women. (*Aloud.*) Your Highness will, I hope, pardon me for thus appearing in your presence, without having first begged an audience through the usual forms? but everything depended on my finding your Highness alone!

PRINCESS.

What is your pleasure, sir?

MARWITZ.

I came to entreat your Highness's pity for a sick man.

PRINCESS.

A sick man!

MARWITZ.

Whom it depends on your Highness alone to restore to health.

PRINCESS.

You must speak more plainly, sir, if you wish me to understand you.

MARWITZ.

Your Highness will, I fear, accuse me of unpardonable presumption, if I dare to touch upon a point on which it becomes me rather to observe a respectful silence; but attachment to my Prince——

PRINCESS (*quickly*).

The Prince sent you hither?

MARWITZ.

Not exactly: it was rather his despairing looks which sent me in search of his physician.

PRINCESS.

A physician called in without his own consent were hardly welcome, methinks.

MARWITZ.

But if it were under the form of a gracious and noble lady?

PRINCESS.

You may mean well, Baron von Marwitz; but

I will learn the Prince's secrets from no lips but his own. [*She turns to leave the room.*

MARWITZ.

Stay, Princess, I beseech you!—for your own —for the Prince's sake! You know not what secret—alas! that you thus force me to speak out what I would have left you to guess. The Prince acknowledges your merit, admires your attractions; but an unhappy mistake—what shall I say?—the treachery of a false friend—has betrayed his heart to the keeping of another; he loves, in short, with a passion he finds it utterly impossible to resist.

PRINCESS.

That, Baron von Marwitz, is what I will believe of no human being.

MARWITZ.

Your Highness thinks even as my lord the Prince. He, too, thinks that every human being can control his inclinations, though it be at the expense of all his earthly happiness. (*Pauses.*) Yet can a feeling, a high-souled Princess demand such a sacrifice? Your Highness afflicts him.

PRINCESS.

Myself not less.

MARWITZ.

And you will, notwithstanding——

PRINCESS.

I will share his fate, be it happy or unhappy, for so I have vowed to do.

MARWITZ.

Indeed!

PRINCESS.

Do you forget, sir, that I am his wife?

MARWITZ.

Hem!—the Prince thinks that many objections exist——

PRINCESS.

I know of none which can allow me to consider myself as free. The Prince may act as he will—he has power on his side. I stand here for my rights, and will maintain the position in which I am placed as long as I can with honour. I know that there are a thousand means—— but let them be tried;—they will find me resolved and prepared. You may leave us, sir!*

MARWITZ.

I have the honour most respectfully to take my leave. Your Highness will act as you think proper; meantime I humbly remind you that the ceremony for this evening is countermanded, and that the marriage by proxy will not be the first of that kind which has been declared null and void.

* "*Sie sind entlassen*," "you are dismissed," is the royal phrase in Germany.

PRINCESS.

You may leave us, sir! [*Exit.*

MARWITZ (*looking after her*).

The devil! She will listen to nothing! but she must—ay, it has come to that—*she must* listen to reason. I can have no princess reign here, against whom I have ventured so far. She or I —it has come to that. The Prince shall send her, by me, his parting compliments. Quick to him, before Saldern has time to commence operations against me. [*Exit.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*The Prince's Cabinet.*

PRINCE (*alone; he walks up and down restlessly—then looks at the clock.*)

PRINCE.

Marwitz must be here immediately. Even at this moment I am, perhaps, a free man. Free! —that sounds well, particularly when we love; and yet, when I consider, it is no slight sacrifice which I make to this pretty, lively maid of honour. When I look back upon the scene of to-day—and truly I cannot think of it without a feeling of shame—with what gentleness—with what dignity she looked, spoke, moved, and still found the means to spare *me* without compromis-

ing herself! I must needs confess it—this Princess is a rare creature.

Enter MARWITZ.

MARWITZ.

My gracious lord!

PRINCE.

Marwitz at last! Tell me in one word that you have succeeded—that all is over—for this suspense is past endurance.

MARWITZ.

I have tried every means in my power to move her Highness.

PRINCE.

Well!

MARWITZ.

All in vain!

PRINCE.

How?

MARWITZ.

Her Highness seems to have made up her mind to listen to nothing which she does not desire to hear.

PRINCE.

But surely you told her——

MARWITZ.

I told her all. I spoke of your Highness's

sufferings—I touched upon the magnanimity we all expected from a female heart——

PRINCE.

And she?——

MARWITZ.

Answered me with scraps of moral philosophy! —talked a vast deal about the duties imposed on her, and which she was resolved to fulfil. And when I most respectfully gave her to understand that your Highness had countermanded the nuptials for this evening, and consequently had decided at all hazards on following the impulse of your heart, she walked out of the room and left me *planté là!*

PRINCE.

You must have made some cursed blunder!

MARWITZ.

Let your Highness try what another can do.

PRINCE.

It seems, then, that we are just where we were this morning?

MARWITZ.

And it wants but two hours to the time appointed for the ceremony.

PRINCE.

Well—'tis the decree of fate. Heaven knows that it would scarcely cost me more to resist my inclinations than to follow them.

MARWITZ.

There remains an expedient by which we should attain our object at once. A few lines from your Highness to the Princess would at once settle the affair.

PRINCE.

Write to her? I see it—excellent! and thus all is decided in two minutes. (*He seizes a pen.*) And yet, Marwitz, when I reflect——

MARWITZ.

Ah! I understand! how could I be so blind? You are in the right, my gracious lord—as Lady Matilda said herself——.

PRINCE.

What did Lady Matilda say?

MARWITZ.

O she! she weeps, poor young lady—naturally. It seems she had set her heart on her Count von Holm, and cannot, of course, understand that he is lost to her for ever, merely because he is metamorphosed into a Prince: and if there remained a single doubt on her mind, Count von Saldern has removed it: I saw him go in to her just now.

PRINCE.

Saldern!

MARWITZ.

He has been for this last hour assuring every

one whom he meets, that he has settled everything between the Princess and your Highness, and that, owing to his representations, the Baroness von Wallenbach had been dismissed.

PRINCE.

He will find himself mistaken, I imagine!

[*He begins to write, but hurriedly—scratches out—writes again, and at length tears the sheet of paper, and takes another. Marwitz retires to the window, and stands watching him.*

MARWITZ (*aside*).

That last stroke told, but I don't feel sure of him yet; would it were signed and sealed!

PRINCE (*aside*).

I cannot retreat; the affair has become too public—and—and do I, after all, *wish* to go back? (*Aloud.*) Hark ye, Marwitz, as to what you say of Saldern, I don't believe one word of it.

MARWITZ.

As your Highness pleases. It is a thing of no consequence, one way or the other.

PRINCE (*aside*).

It must—it must be done! my very esteem and respect for the Princess drive me to it. Shall I wait till she is dressed for the ceremony, and all the court assembled?

MARWITZ (*aloud*).

It is now striking six.

PRINCE.

It is as if I could not find words in the language to express my thoughts. (*He writes a few lines, then breaks the pen, and flings it from him.*) A vile pen!

[*He opens a pocketbook, takes a penknife from it, and mends a pen.*

MARWITZ (*at the window*).

I think we shall have rain, your Highness!

PRINCE.

Silence!

[*He writes—then folds the letter, and seals it with a wafer.*

MARWITZ (*approaching*).

Your Highness has finished?

PRINCE.

You are in great haste, methinks. I will read over again what I have written; and yet—no, no—better not—there, take it!

MARWITZ (*taking it quickly*).

Within two minutes it shall be in her Highness's hand. [*He hurries out.*

PRINCE (*calling after him*).

Marwitz!—gone! (*He breathes deeply—rubs his forehead—goes to the window — returns;*

seats himself at the writing-table — takes the penknife abstractedly, and opens the pocketbook to replace it. His eye falls on the letters within — he turns them over hurriedly, and then throws them down on the table.) What am I about? they are nothing to me now! (*He takes them up one after another.*) Those were happy times, when I received and read them with a beating heart! The handwriting brings to my mind her whom I thought I loved—my chosen one. I can never get rid of that image in my fancy. (*He reads.*) Where is the letter of the seventh? (*He searches for it among the rest, and finds it.*) O here it is! in these sweet lines I thought I beheld revealed the whole soul of my Matilda! Matilda?—yes—but another Matilda—not her whom I love; and yet are beauty and sprightliness the first, the greatest qualities of a women?—and even if it were so, is the Princess herself so deficient in charms? But then the soul which sparkles in the eyes of *my* Matilda—her love for me—the wrong she has suffered for my sake—Steinau's treachery—enough! it *is* so, and well is it that so it is.

Enter the MAJOR VON SOLLAU.

PRINCE.

What brings you here, my dear Major?

MAJOR.

Your Highness sent to me an hour ago, to say you wished to ride. The horses are ready.

PRINCE.

Ah, true—I remember; but I wish it no longer.

MAJOR.

Then I beg your Highness's pardon for having disturbed you.

PRINCE.

Not in the least—I am rather glad that you have come. I wanted a little amusement.

MAJOR.

On your wedding-day?

PRINCE.

Why not? Sit down, and now tell me something new.

MAJOR.

Of our journey? of the Princess-bride? But then I must warn your Highness that on this subject I should never have done. You are in truth a happy man, my lord, who may boast of having carried off the very pearl of princely maidens. And do not suppose that I am the only one who thinks so; the whole city, the whole country, are of my opinion.

PRINCE (*with a forced smile*).

Indeed!

MAJOR.

I had the greatest trouble, when we entered the gates of the town, to prevent the people from taking the horses from the carriage, and drawing it to the gates; so enthusiastic were they when they heard that she had bestowed the whole sum set apart for her wedding jewels on our hospital here.

PRINCE (*interrupting*).

I know all about that. Tell me something new —your last campaign—your last love adventure —anything.

MAJOR.

As for my love adventures, please your Highness, they are, I think, brought to an end.

PRINCE.

O impossible!

MAJOR.

I am near four and thirty: a man must settle at some time or other, and so I have resolved to take a wife.

PRINCE.

A wife!—you, Major? And who is the happy she?

MAJOR.

I have this morning obtained the consent of

a lovely and amiable woman, and nothing is wanting to my happiness but your Highness's concurrence.

PRINCE (*smiling*).

A lovely, amiable woman! I think I could guess her name—ha! it begins with a W?

MAJOR (*eagerly*).

Is it possible? your Highness knows all then? This is beyond my hopes!

PRINCE.

Why, the lady, methinks, has distinguished you pretty openly.

MAJOR.

Openly—I know not—but kindly——

PRINCE.

The widow von Wertheim—is it not?

MAJOR.

Your Highness's pardon—the young Baroness von Wallerbach.

PRINCE.

Wallerbach!!

MAJOR.

Matilda von Wallerbach—your Highness may have remarked her—the pretty maid of honour n the suite of the Princess!

PRINCE (*springing from his chair*).

She?—impossible!—it is not so!

MAJOR.

Impossible? when I assure your Highness that the young lady herself——

PRINCE.

It is impossible, I tell you;—confess now, Sollau, that you were bribed to this, and I will forgive all!

MAJOR.

Bribed to do what?—to fall in love with a pretty woman, my lord?

PRINCE.

Has not my Grand Chamberlain something to do with this?—say so at once.

MAJOR.

The Grand Chamberlain?—with all due respect for that excellent old gentleman, he is not exactly the person I should select on such an occasion.

PRINCE.

The Princess then?

MAJOR.

I think Lady Matilda would hardly venture to speak to her Highness on the affair to-day—but——

PRINCE (*bursting into fury*).

The devil take women, wooing, and wooers!

[*He rushes out.*

MAJOR.

What upon earth is the matter with him?

there must be something in the wind;—faith, he very nearly frightened me. [*Exit.*

The scene changes to the Princess's chamber.

The PRINCESS—*the* COUNTESS VON THALHEIM.

COUNTESS.

Your Highness should have sent for me: it is contrary to all etiquette that a gentleman should intrude himself into your presence without having observed the usual forms, and particularly *that* Marwitz: I cannot endure the man.

PRINCESS.

Think of it no more, my dear Countess; he was not in my way—I did not mind him.

COUNTESS.

Will not your Highess think of your toilette? the hairdresser waits in the anteroom, and we have not quite two hours before the ceremony.

PRINCESS.

Too early yet.

[*She seats herself at a table, and takes up a book to conceal her agitation.*

COUNTESS.

Your Highness has not looked at your bridal dress; it is as simple and elegant as it is

costly. It has come direct from Lyons—shall I have it brought here?

PRINCESS (*abstractedly*).

What did you say?

COUNTESS.

And the set of ornaments to match—you cannot judge of the effect until you see both together. (*After a pause, aside*)—I wish I could divert her mind, though but for a few moments—but, alas! I fear she knows too well how matters stand. [*A knock at the door.*

PRINCESS.

Some one knocks, my dear Countess: see who it is. (*The Countess goes out.*) This suspense is terrible to bear!—even now, perhaps, my fate may be decided past recall—I commit myself to Heaven—(*clasping her hands, and looking upwards*)—let but strength be granted to me, to do nothing unworthy the dignity or the duty of a woman!

COUNTESS (*returns with a letter in her hand*).

It was well I went myself—that wretch Marwitz was there again. I told him, at once, your Highness was not visible, and he gave me this billet from the Prince to deliver to you.

PRINCESS (*eagerly*).

To me? O give it—give it——

COUNTESS (*anxiously*).

Read it then.

PRINCESS (*tearing open the letter—reads*).

COUNTESS.

Now—what can he say—what is it—I beseech your Highness? You turn pale—you tremble—sit down, for Heaven's sake."

[*The Princess sinks upon a chair.*

COUNTESS.

There must be something dreadful in that paper.

THE PRINCESS (*commanding herself with effort.*)

May I beg of you, dearest Countess, to leave me for one moment?

COUNTESS.

I go—but only—O tell me at least——

PRINCESS.

In a quarter of an hour—you must—you *shall* know all.

[*The Countess retires to the window, looks out, leaves the room for a short time, returns, and remains behind the Princess's chair.*

PRINCESS.

Be silent, wounded feeling—insulted womanhood! for what is now to be done, must be resolved in cool blood. This letter is too plain in tenor and expression to be misunderstood; and

since he has found courage to tell me in direct terms that he intends to reject me, it will not cost him much more to do it. The die is cast—we are divorced for ever; whether rightfully or not, let him answer that:—be minè the duty to see that what is now unavoidable, should take place with as little offence to my own people, as little mischief between the two countries as possible. And this I must effect—but how? by what means? However I may resolve, myself must be the victim—*that* I feel. (*After a pause.*) It must be so; there is no other way. No blame must fall on the Prince; for in that case my dear father's warmth—his hatred against the Prince's whole family, so recently subdued—O! it were fatal!—and now, though he regard me as an undutiful daughter—though his anger fall upon me in consequence, yet will he never know how I have been scorned; and thus I spare my good father that bitterest trial of all. (*She seats herself, and writes, with an air of profound melancholy, but with rapidity and decision—then folds the letter, and writes the address.*) There they lie—the most momentous words I ever penned in my life!—Countess!

COUNTESS (*approaching*).

Your Highness has wept, I fear.

PRINCESS (*firmly*).

Not so! Countess—dear Countess! I con-

jure you, by all the friendship you have ever shown me—promise me—grant me one request.

COUNTESS.

Your Highness has only to command me—I am ready.

PRINCESS.

Promise me to maintain an everlasting silence on the events of to-day,

COUNTESS.

Why so?

PRINCESS.

Neither my father nor the world must ever know what has impelled me to the step I am about to take.

COUNTESS.

What step? you alarm me!

PRINCESS.

Thalheim!—but for heaven's sake no remonstrances,—we leave the court this evening. I say *we*, for I hope—I trust you will accompany me?

COUNTESS.

To the end of the world! but may I not know——

PRINCESS (*holding out the Prince's letter*).

There—read!

COUNTESS (*after reading it*).

This is most unjustifiable! most atrocious!

PRINCESS.

No remarks, Countess! but you see at once——

COUNTESS.

O when our gracious Duke hears of this insult!—

PRINCESS.

You will be silent—and, besides yourself, no one knows anything of the true state of things, except, indeed, those whose interest, much more than mine, it is to bury all in secrecy. See that an express be sent off instantly with this letter to my father.

COUNTESS (*takes the letter*).

And will your Highness at once return to him?

PRINCESS.

No; for the present I shall take refuge in the convent of St. Mary, on the frontier; it is only about fifteen miles* off, and we can travel all night. Tell my chamberlain to have the carriages and horses ready, and let my women make the necessary preparations.

COUNTESS.

O! reflect, your Highness!——

PRINCESS.

No time is left me for reflection: I must act.

* About seventy English miles.

Do what I have just desired, as you hold dear my honour and my peace, and then—send hither the Baroness Matilda.

COUNTESS.

Matilda!

PRINCESS.

Yes—instantly.

COUNTESS.

I obey your Highness. (*Aside.*) But for the letter, I will take leave to think farther of it.

[*Exit.*

PRINCESS.

Yes! I am more tranquil. What I do costs me so dearly, that—that I may be assured it is right.* I have scarcely yet dared to look steadily to my future fate; exposed to the censure of the world—its scorn, perhaps,—my self-confidence betrayed, and doomed henceforth to a life of seclusion,—what remained to me but my father's love? and even that I have sacrificed! Desolate I stand at the outset of my life—and see all the hopes and plans of my youth withered in their bloom: they sprang up and were cherished in the wish to do good, and merely to avoid doing harm costs me—my ALL! (*She remains lost in thought.*)

* A woman's logic!—reasoning which I have heard in my time from many women who were not princesses.

Enter MATILDA.

PRINCESS (*rising quickly*).

Ah! 'tis you, my dear Matilda?

MATILDA.

The Countess von Thalhein has just told me that your Highness wished to speak with me. I trust there is no mistake?

PRINCESS.

None, my dear—I was really desirous to see you; I have much to say to you: be seated.

MATILDA.

Your Highness's condescension—

PRINCESS.

No more of that; these moments are too important to be wasted in empty phrases. I must in the first place acquaint you with the resolution I have formed; for that must determine the course you will yourself pursue.

MATILDA.

A resolution?

PRINCESS.

I shall leave the court this evening, and take up my abode in the convent of St. Mary on the frontier, there to await my father's commands.

MATILDA (*in the utmost confusion and embarrassment*).

Do I hear aright? You will not surely! I beseech your Highness—

PRINCESS (*giving her the Prince's letter*).

This letter will convince you that my remaining here a moment longer is out of the question.

MATILDA (*opening the letter, glances at the signature*).

From the Prince? It is not fitting—I dare not presume—(*Returning it.*)

PRINCESS.

Read it, I beg—I command!

[*Matilda reads, the paper trembling in her hand.*

PRINCESS.

Well, my dear! what think you?

MATILDA.

Horrible! what must your Highness think of me? and yet I protest that till this moment I heard nothing—knew nothing. I have given no cause—I confess indeed—I did see him once, at the house of the Baron von Steinau, but how could I ever dream——? I hope your Highness will believe that I am equally amazed and indignant.

PRINCESS.

Be assured that I do not doubt you;—I not only acquit you of all blame, but your conduct this day has won you my lasting esteem and friendship. I will not easily forget, Matilda, that, to save my peace, you would have fled the presence of the man you loved!

MATILDA (*almost overwhelmed.*)

What means your Highness?

PRINCESS.

Do not tremble thus, nor shrink from me because I have read your heart. Now that my fate is irrevocably decided, it can signify nothing; the Prince is nothing to me now—and his love for you—nothing—except as regards yourself. Matilda! how do you intend to act?

MATILDA.

I—I am wholly at your Highness's disposal—it depends on you alone to decide—to command.

PRINCESS.

Do not take ill what I am about to say, Matilda, nor attribute it to any feelings of feminine jealousy or offended pride. Listen to me! the Prince loves you, and is master of his own actions; it is *possible* that he might, in spite of all conventional obstacles, raise the beautiful and noble Matilda von Wallerbach to his throne:—it is *possible*—I repeat—but, Matilda, he will *not* do it—believe me!

MATILDA.

Can your Highness suppose that any such presumptuous hopes——?

PRINCESS.

Allow me: I do not give you my opinion as an infallible prediction; perhaps I may be mis-

taken—*perhaps!*—and will you stake your peace and fair fame on a *perhaps?* And even supposing the best, would it be wholly indifferent to you, to be stigmatised as a heartless, treacherous friend!

MATILDA (*hiding her face*).

Would you crush me?

PRINCESS.

No—but point out the way in which you may at once secure your honour, without forfeiting the happiness you perhaps have reason to expect, or at least to hope. To compel you is not properly in my power, were it my inclination; though in my suite, you have not formally entered my service;—but to assist and counsel you as the young girl trusted to my protection—this I regard as my duty. Matilda! if you put any faith in my friendship, fly, I conjure you, from this court—return to your native place—I have earnestly recommended you to my father's kindness——

MATILDA.

O Heavens!

PRINCESS.

Without divulging the reasons for the particular interest I take in your welfare: the Countess von Thalheim has promised me the most inviolable secrecy—you may therefore be

assured that no one at home will ever suspect the true state of the case. My divorce will sufficiently account for your return. Safe within the circle of your own kindred, you can wait with propriety till your fate is decided—and you will not wait long: if the Prince's love be something more than the mere caprice of a youthful fancy, it is better that he should seek you, and lead you forth in all honour from your paternal home: and if it be nothing more, you have, by this magnanimous resolve, avoided the loss of your reputation on the one hand, and the misery of an unequal and unhappy marriage on the other. Do not reply: I require no answer at present. I have discharged my conscience, and you are, and must remain, mistress of your own actions. (*She goes to the table, opens a casket, and takes out a small case, which she gives to Matilda.*) And now—accept this—wear it for my sake, that none may say I parted from you in displeasure.

[*She embraces Matilda, kisses her on the forehead, and leaves the room quickly.*

MATILDA (*following*).

Your Highness! — dearest Princess!—she's gone—and has taken with her my peace—my self-esteem—and all my confidence in mine own heart! O had I earlier known her as she is! earlier learned to appreciate this angelic being—

before I had listened to that Marwitz! I came here rebelling in heart against the reproaches I expected: steeled against all—prepared for all—for all—but to find that she thinks far better of me than I deserve—esteems me more guiltless than I really am! (*She opens the case*). Her portrait—the portrait of that angel!—and I must wear it on my bosom—that whenever I look down with shame, that mild reproachful glance may encounter mine! O that I could erase this day from my existence—that I could stand where I stood but yesterday! And yet—have I then erred so far that there is no return possible?—If I could—? yes! it shall be done instantly—and though the step were too late to do her service—yet for my own sake!—I must be reconciled with myself, or die! [*Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE—*The Prince's chamber.*

The PRINCE *seated at a table—a book in his hand.*

PRINCE.

I cannot command my attention. (*He throws down the book, and looks at his watch.*) Seven o'clock—one whole hour! sixty eternal minutes gone, and no answer yet! Walter!

Enter a VALET-DE-CHAMBRE.

No letter for me yet?

VALET.

None, your Highness.

PRINCE.

Very well. [*Exit Valet-de-chambre.*

PRINCE.

I know not why, but this silence affects me

more than the bitterest, the most angry reply. Reproaches are the expression of anger—silence of contempt. Despised by *her?*—I cannot bear the thought. (*After a pause.*) Walter!

VALET-DE-CHAMBRE (*entering*).

VALET.

Did your Highness call?

PRINCE.

Is the Princess in her chamber?

VALET.

I know not, your Highness.

PRINCE (*angrily*).

Not know! What do you mean by shrugging your shoulders, fellow?

VALET.

Your Highness, the people say—but it is not fitting to repeat it to your Highness.

PRINCE (*angrily*).

But if I insist upon hearing—upon knowing it?—what do the people say?

VALET.

I cannot conceive, your Highness, how the report arose, but it is said in the palace, that the Princess's trunks are packed—and that a berline, with post-horses, is ordered to be at the garden-gate at eight o'clock precisely.

PRINCE.

Who told you this?

VALET.

One whispers it to another. I think it is known through the whole court by this time.

PRINCE.

So!—all is over.

VALET.

Not an hour ago I saw your Highness's groom, Conrad, running to the post-house;—a letter from the Princess to the Duke, her father, is to be sent off by express immediately.

PRINCE.

Enough. [*The Valet leaves the room.*

PRINCE (*after a pause*).

She does well to fly me—to call up her outraged dignity, and give me over to the enmity of her father, and the detestation of mankind. She came here—her heart overflowing with confidence and love—heaven directed, as she supposed—trusting in my vows, and in the heart I had proffered her:—and I returned insult for kindness—hatred for love—and for what? Let me confess it—only, blind fool that I am! in defiance and contradiction: or why is it that the Wallerbach has become so indifferent to me? I have bartered the possession of a real treasure for an empty idol.

Enter the COUNT.

COUNT (*aside*).

Methinks we are at the turning of the tide.

PRINCE (*hurrying to meet him*).

What is it?—a letter?

COUNT.

Only a trifle: the burgomaster begged to know whether your Highness will receive the congratulatory address from the city deputies this evening, and I told him——

PRINCE (*hurriedly*).

What?

COUNT.

That, for to-day at least, it was out of the question.

PRINCE.

Right.

COUNT.

Au reste, everything has proceeded in accordance with the wishes of your Highness.

PRINCE.

How so?

COUNT.

Your Highness knows without doubt that the Princess's departure is fixed for this evening?

PRINCE.

Indeed!

COUNT.

Thus there remains no farther obstacle to your views with regard to the Lady Matilda.

PRINCE.

Count!

COUNT.

Why that look of surprise and displeasure? I have reconsidered the subject--and begin to think your Highness not so far wrong—after all.

PRINCE.

Really?

COUNT.

The deception practised by Steinau frees you from all obligation on your part. The Baroness von Wallerbach has beauty, wit—is in love with your Highness—at least you have reason to suppose so—

PRINCE (*bitterly*).

Have I indeed?

COUNT.

The Princess appears to have taken her decision at once like a sensible woman; she perfectly understands that, after such a *scandale*, she can no longer hold her position in society; and on leaving this, she will take up her residence at the convent of St. Mary on the frontier.

PRINCE.

In the convent! Saldern, you will drive me distracted!

COUNT.

I thought to make your mind easy, my gracious lord! As long as I saw any hope of reconciling you with the Princess, your Highness knows that I pleaded for her.

PRINCE.

I know it. (*Pauses.*) Did you hear that the Princess had sent off an express to her father?

COUNT.

I had the letter in my hand.

PRINCE.

The victory is yours, Saldern; but do not triumph too soon. Things have gone far; but shall I, therefore, give up all as lost? If I now fly to her—if I tell her—but no—O no!—too late! I dared to outrage her when she stood before me all gentleness and patience; and now that she has been roused to assert herself, shall I bow the knee before her? besides, all is publicly known—even the Duke himself will in a few hours be informed of everything.

COUNT (*taking out a letter*).

Not sooner than your Highness pleases; the express is not despatched: here is the Princess's letter.

PRINCE (*about to seize the letter*).

O give it to me!

COUNT (*withholding it*).

Your Highness—a letter from a daughter to her father!

PRINCE.

Do you think I would dare to violate it? I will only keep it: it can be nowhere safer than in my hands, methinks. (*He takes the letter.*)

Enter MARWITZ *hastily.*

MARWITZ.

Your Highness, I have just heard that the Princess—— (*Perceiving the Count.*) Good evening, your Excellency.

PRINCE.

What brings you here, Baron von Marwitz?

MARWITZ (*in a low voice*).

I came to inform your Highness that the Princess is preparing to leave the court in a few moments. Your Highness must not permit such a thing: it will embroil us with the Duke her father. We must endeavour to soothe her Highness, and then——

PRINCE (*contemptuously*).

Go—leave me: I have no time to listen to your devices now.

MARWITZ (*looking at the Count*).

Ah, I see; but I trust your Highness will remember that in all this affair I have only obeyed orders.

PRINCE (*impatiently*).

It may be so. I would be alone.

MARWITZ.

If your Highness should have heard of the proposals of Major von Sollau, I can only assure you——

PRINCE.

Let him woo whom he will, and marry whom he likes—I have far other things to think of!

MARWITZ (*aside*).

Not jealous! then we are at the last gasp.

PRINCE.

Saldern, think of me as you will, I *must* know the contents of this paper. (*He tears open the Princess's letter.*)

COUNT.

For heaven's sake reflect.

PRINCE.

I must! I must!—it contains the sentence of my fate!

[*He reads hurriedly, and with increasing emotion; at length he covers his eyes, and sinks into a chair.*

COUNT.

What ails your Highness?

PRINCE.

Astonishment, admiration, remorse! (*Rising.*) There, take it!—no, *I* will read it. Listen, and you too, Marwitz! You will then confess, like me, that till this hour you never knew what real magnanimity was. (*He reads.*) "My dear father! I regarded it as a touching proof of your paternal love and anxiety for my welfare that you had selected for my husband a prince distinguished for every quality of mind and heart; yet have I presumed to sunder for ever the bond you had blessed. I think I hear you demand, in angry surprise, the reason for such a step. O my dear father! what will you say when I confess to you that I can give none, except, perhaps, an unfortunate mistrust in myself, which convinces me—notwithstanding the esteem which the Prince has expressed for me—that I am not capable of making him as happy as he deserves to be. When you receive these lines, I shall be already at the convent of St. Mary, where I shall await your commands. Matilda von Wallerbach, who has proved herself worthy of my entire esteem, returns to your court. I recommend her most particularly to your protection and goodness."—Now, my lords, what say you?

COUNT.

By heaven, this is beyond my hopes!

MARWITZ.

Noble, faith!

PRINCE.

O that I were not so oppressed by the feeling of my own unworthiness!—that low at her feet—

A VALET-DE-CHAMBRE (*throwing open the door.*) Her Highness the Princess!

PRINCE.

What!—how!—did I hear aright? Saldern, my knees tremble—I shall sink!

COUNT.

Be composed; what is past is past, and cannot be redeemed.

Enter the PRINCESS *in a travelling dress, followed by the Countess.*

PRINCESS.

Your Highness, pardon this intrusion! (*Turning to Marwitz.*) Baron von Marwitz, will you have the goodness to desire my attendants to assemble in the left wing of the palace?

MARWITZ.

I obey your Highness. [*He goes out.*

PRINCESS (*to the Prince*).

Your Highness wrote to me, and I ought to

have replied to your letter; but I deemed it more advisable to bring the answer myself than to trust it to another; I wished also, before I quitted your palace, to take my leave, and at the same time to explain some part of my conduct which may have exposed me to misconstruction: these are the motives of my visit. My first intention was to request your presence; but I—I feared a refusal, and, at least for a few minutes longer, I possess the privileges of a wife.

PRINCE.

Righteous heaven! all is then decided?

PRINCESS.

It is, irrevocably. The express which informs my father of my resolution is already far on the road. My carriage waits, and in a few moments I shall have left your court—for ever!

PRINCE.

Princess!

PRINCESS.

Fear no ill consequences from this sudden step, which a due regard for my own honour has forced upon me. I came hither to put an end to the ancient animosity between our families—through me it shall never be rekindled; if you enjoin silence to the few who are acquainted with the real motives of my departure, neither my father nor the world will ever be informed of

them. As far as regards your conduct to me, I leave it to your conscience. I make no reproaches; only thus much let me say, that I felt most deeply, most painfully, what I endured in silence. Do not ascribe my composure to a want of womanly feeling. I am as susceptible on certain points as others, and not for all the crowns of the universe would I stoop to *beg* a heart. I would have *won* yours, had it been possible, even at the sacrifice of my pride; for I beheld in you, my affianced husband, the man to whom my father had confided me—whom it was my duty to honour and to love. I have tried, and have failed. I am now free, and am consoled by the thought that the bonds between us have been severed by no fault of mine. Farewell, Prince! farewell for ever! May you find that happiness in another which I was not thought worthy to bestow. [*She turns to go.*

PRINCE (*with deep emotion*).

Matilda! yes—you are free! I have lost you for ever! Return to your home, to the circle of those whose good angel you have hitherto been, until that happy man appear to whom Heaven has decreed the blessing I have thrown from me: yet, O do not despise me! and be assured that you leave behind you the most miserable of men!

PRINCESS.

What means your Highness?—what change is this?

PRINCE.

'Tis my heart speaks—this heart that never knew itself till now! I love you, Matilda! I feel that I have never loved but you, even under the features of another. O unblest error, which has cost me the happiness of my life!

COUNT.

Heaven forbid, your Highness! I hope better from the noble nature of the Princess. From whom could we expect forgiveness for past offences, if not from the sweetest impersonation of feminine gentleness and virtue?

PRINCE.

Matilda! if it were possible—I dare not, I do not presume to entreat—but think that the happiness of a whole people is at this moment in your hands!

[*Sound of bells, and shouts of the people are heard from without.*

PRINCESS.

Ha! what means this?

Enter the MAJOR.

MAJOR.

The company assembled in the great saloon

wish to know whether they are to proceed to the Princess's apartment or here.

PRINCE.

How?—did I not in my madness order them——

COUNT.

Pardon me, your Highness, if I delayed to fulfil a command which I knew proceeded from your lips, and not from your heart. The ceremony has not been countermanded, and no one knows of this momentary infidelity to your bride.

PRINCE.

Heavens! what do you tell me? Matilda!—(*kneeling at her feet*)—angel and saint as you are, will you publish to the whole world that guilty error which is yet unknown?

PRINCESS (*with deep feeling*).

I vowed before the altar to cling to you through good and through evil, and had never thought to quit your side unless you had driven me from it. So soon as you wish me to remain, I remain—without even asking what my fate is like to be.

PRINCE.

I deserve this mistrust, which the future shall dissipate. (*Kissing her hand.*) Never, never, shall you regret that you have raised a repenting

sinner to your heart; and this letter (*kissing it*) shall be the seal of my vow!

PRINCESS.

What letter?

PRINCE.

Your letter to the Duke your father—the true reflection of a gentle and generous nature!

PRINCESS.

Then my father?——

COUNT.

Remains ignorant of all the events of this day. What will your Highness tell him in your next letter?

PRINCESS.

That I am happy! that I have found the husband my heart had imaged to itself!

PRINCE.

O if indeed you do not quite despise me, I may hope one day to win your approving love!—— Major, (*turning to him*,) you behold in me the happiest of men!

MAJOR.

And your Highness beholds in me one not less happy. I have just been formally betrothed to the Baroness Matilda.

PRINCESS.

Matilda!

MAJOR.

With your Highness's consent—and I trust I am not deceived in my choice.—(*In a low voice to the Prince.*) Do not look on me strangely, your Highness! my lovely bride has told me all. I had not presumed, perhaps, to enter the lists with the Prince, but I am well pleased to have supplanted the Count von Holm.

PRINCE.

Ah! that unlucky Holm! he is banished henceforth from my court. Tell the company we shall appear immediately in the grand saloon.

COUNTESS.

Immediately? impossible! the Princess is still in her travelling dress.

PRINCE.

I did not observe it.

PRINCESS.

I fly to change it—but I will preserve it while I live: it shall serve to remind me that if man conquers through courage and strength, the woman's weapons are gentleness and patience.

The curtain falls.

THE END.

THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

(Der Landwirth.)

A PLAY.

IN FOUR ACTS.

FREELY TRANSLATED.

REMARKS.

The original title of this play is "Der Landwirth," a word which may signify either a farmer, or one who has the management of a landed estate. It was first acted at Dresden in the beginning of the year 1836, M. Emile Devriént playing the beautiful character of Rudolph. Next to the "Oheim," it has proved the most popular of the Princess Amelia's plays, and is, I think, more calculated to please the English taste. It appears to me very lively and elegant.

The translation here given is by no means *literally* faithful, as in the foregoing pieces. It was executed more than a year ago, with a view to the English stage, and I have not thought it necessary to alter it, the deviations from the original text being immaterial, and in no respect changing its spirit or the truth of the characters. A few lines, which are interpolations, are marked by inverted commas. Perhaps I ought to apologise for the manner in which the dialogue runs every now and then into a sort of halting blank verse. I can only say that it happened almost unconsciously: the words seemed thus to arrange themselves without effort or transposition. The style of the Princess Amelia is particularly clear and elegant, without ornament or affectation; but the construction of German prose is in itself poetical to an English ear.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

BARON VON THÜRMER, *A Saxon Nobleman.*
EDWARD, *His Son.*
RUDOLPH, *His Nephew.*
COUNT VON LEISTENFELD, *A Bohemian Nobleman.*
COUNTESS MARIE VON LEISTENFELD, *His daughter.*
DAME BEATRICE, *Housekeeper in the Baron's country-house.*
LOUIS, *Edward's Valet de Chambre.*
LISETTE, *The Countess's Waiting-maid.*
GRIMES, *A peasant.*

The scene lies at the country-house of the Baron von Thürmer.

THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

ACT I.

SCENE—*A room.*

Servants hurrying past with luggage—bells ringing, and all the bustle of an arrival.

BEATRICE.

Now if I could but guess what for all the world brings our old Lord down here just at this time?—hasn't he a palace in town, looking on the market-place, and fine friends in plenty—and horses and carriages, and all the means a great rich Lord could desire, to be flattered, fooled, robbed to his heart's content; and must he needs come down to the country to weary himself, and

worry his neighbours? Out on't! These fine folks from town never know, for pure pride of heart, what they would be at. When I think of the life we shall have of it, I could wish myself a dormouse to go to sleep for the next six months. I'd sooner have ten stranger-folk in the house than the master on't—for strangers must just be on their *p's and q's*,* and take what one gives 'em—but the master!—I warrant me, he thinks he may do just as he likes, and no more minds smoking tobacco under the noses of his ancestors, and going with his dirty boots all over my clean carpets—and the worst of it is, that all the time one must make him a low curtsey, and say, "Your humble servant, my Lord."

Enter LOUIS.

LOUIS.

Madam Beatrice!

BEATRICE.

What's the matter now?

LOUIS.

My Lord desires me to say that you are to have the state-rooms set in order as soon as possible.

* Müssen sich bücken und drüken, is the German proverb.

BEATRICE.

My Lord says so, does he? Master Louis, my Lord says no such thing, or he doesn't know Dame Beatrice. Set the rooms in order, forsooth! where I have the ordering of things, they are always in order. And pray what may he want the state-rooms for?

LOUIS.

We expect visiters.

BEATRICE.

So—indeed? and who, I pray you?

LOUIS.

An old friend and schoolfellow of my Lord's—Count Leistenfeld.

BEATRICE.

Only a gentleman!* heaven be praised, and defend us from lady-folk!

LOUIS.

And wherefore?

BEATRICE.

Bethink you, Master Louis, when I see only a gun and a pair of top-boots standing afore the room-door, I know I've only to have a comfortable arm-chair, and a few billets of wood laid by the stove, and all's done; but alackaday! when I see a lady's satin reticule and bandboxes, and smell eau-de-cologne, there's no end to the

* Eine Mannsperson.

wanting and the calling; first it's another looking-glass—and then a sofa, or a carpet,* or a footstool; and then I must make tea—or send up lemonade—and what my lady doesn't want, my lady's maid does. Lord save us, Master Louis, but them fine lady-folk are a mortal plague wherever they come!

LOUIS.

Then it's a plague you're very likely to have, Madam Beatrice, for they say the Count brings the young Countess, his daughter, with him.

BEATRICE.

What, must the man have a daughter too? Well, well, and when are these folks to come?

LOUIS.

Why, my Lord was in hopes they would have allowed him a week or a fortnight to prepare and give them a grand reception; but it seems the old Count is a very impatient old gentleman, who cannot for his life wait for anything; and so the news comes that our visiters are already at Thalberg, and that early this evening we may expect them here.

BEATRICE.

This very day! bless us all! And pray how long are we to keep them when they do come?

* Not generally to be found in a German bed-room.

LOUIS (*mysteriously*).

How long? that I suppose depends on certain circumstances.

BEATRICE.

What circumstances?

LOUIS.

O I can tell you they don't come only to amuse themselves like; I know all about it—and I've a great mind—but mum's the word: for you must know it's my young master's secret.

BEATRICE.

I'll be as secret—as secret as yourself—so now then. [*They draw chairs.*

LOUIS.

Why, you must know, they talk of a marriage of the young Countess——

BEATRICE.

With our young master?*

LOUIS.

With him: you see he knows her already—and he's in love with her desperate: and she knows him, and she's dying for love of him—that is to say, she's in love with him, without knowing him—or rather, to speak plainly, she knows him, and she doesn't know him—you understand?

* Junker is the proper title of a young nobleman, and given to both Edward and Rudolph.

BEATRICE.

I! I don't understand one word of it.

LOUIS.

You don't? Ha, ha, ha! I express myself, as we say, *diplomatically*—that you may *not* understand: we studied politics on our travels, and visited incog., Madam Beatrice; did you ever visit incog.?

BEATRICE.

No, never; whereabouts is it?

LOUIS.

Ha, ha, ha!—I see I must explain. You must understand that my young master introduced himself under another name, and I, not to betray him, did the same, and called myself *Henry*. Ah, many a pretty girl, at Prague, is now sighing after a certain Henry!

BEATRICE (*aside*).

The man is clean out of his wits.

LOUIS.

To travel incog., Madame Beatrice, is the only way to study men and manners, let me tell you. Any man's ready to serve any man, who is known to be rich and noble; no great art in getting a sweetheart when one produces one's credentials of rank and fortune: but when a young nobleman locks up his letters of credit in his writing-case, thrusts his stars and orders under

his waistcoat, drops his name and title, and yet creeps so near the heart of a pretty girl that she's ready to run off with him any day in the week, and live on soup-meagre in a cottage with him all her life long—ah, that's the thing that tickles the fancy—that's the true romantic for you!

BEATRICE.

Shall I bring you a glass of water, master Louis, with a little sugar and vinegar in it? I fancy your journey has given you a little touch of fever—eh?

Enter RUDOLPH.

RUDOLPH.

A thousand welcomes home, my good friend Louis! let me look at you! ah, you've grown thinner—that comes of travelling, Louis! Can I see your lord?

LOUIS.

Not yet, sir, I believe. His lordship was so tired with travelling all night, that he has just thrown himself on his bed.

RUDOLPH.

That's provoking;—he is displeased, perhaps, that I was not here to receive him, but I come this moment from Feldkirchen, where I have been busied all the morning with masons and

carpenters about the building of the new farm-house. But your master, my cousin Edward, he is not asleep too, I suppose?

LOUIS.

O no! he has just walked into the garden.

RUDOLPH.

Bring him here, my good Louis; run and bring him to me: I so long to see him! and I must not stir out, lest my uncle wake and ask for me. But stay, Louis! how did you get on at Prague?

BEATRICE.

Ay, sir! ask him that.

LOUIS.

Hush!—Why, sir, one may say that my master, among his equals, made an era, as I did among mine. We produced an effect, I can tell you. Bohemia is a fine country!—but I have it all down in black and white—it's the fashion, when one travels, to write a journal, and mine is at your honour's service—eighty pages of foolscap. (*Pulls out papers.*)

RUDOLPH.

Ha! ha! ha! thank you, Louis: but you know the proverb—too much learning makes a man mad.* Go, bring my cousin quick!

LOUIS.

I'm gone, sir. [*Exit.*

* Zu viel wissen, macht Kopfweh, is the German proverb.

RUDOLPH.

I cannot tell you how glad I am that my uncle has come back to us at last.

BEATRICE.

Humph! he might have staid in town long enough for me.

RUDOLPH.

I hope you speak in jest, my good Beatrice? I should be angry else. He is so good! and I so love him!

BEATRICE.

I'm sure he's unkind enough to you, often and often.

RUDOLPH.

Unkind! never! true, he rebukes me sometimes—
For that I'm country bred, and know but little
Of the world's ways: but he means all in kindness,
And for my good.

BEATRICE.

If he had brought you up as he brought up his son, you might have been as clever as he is, I wot.

RUDOLPH.

But not clever enough to earn my own bread, as I do now. Dancing and fencing and music

are for the rich, and not for a poor devil like myself; my uncle knows that full well.

BEATRICE.

You might have gone to college and studied, like other young gentlemen.

RUDOLPH.

I *have* studied that by which I am to live—agriculture. It is through my uncle's kindness that I am better off than those who come from the university, and work for years without pay.*

BEATRICE.

Ay, ay—but methinks you might have been something better than a mere farmer.

RUDOLPH.

No, Dame Beatrice, no. I am here, for eight months in the year at least, the greatest man in the five villages round — a very pleasant consciousness of dignity, and one to which I assure you I am by no means indifferent.

BEATRICE.

You, with your name and quality, do you think it an honour to be your uncle's steward?

RUDOLPH.

Yes, an honour: for thus I am enabled to repay my benefactor some small part of what I owe him; for what remains over and above, may

* See the introductory remarks to *The Young Ward.*

Heaven reward him duly! Gratitude lays no heavy burthen on a willing heart, and gladly will I remain his debtor all my life long.

BEATRICE.

Good Lord, to hear him talk! His debtor!—for what?

RUDOLPH.

For all I have—for all I know—for all I am. Does he not call me his *son?* Do I not call him *father?* and with reason, for a father he has been to me. He took me into his house a helpless, houseless orphan—Heaven bless him for it!

BEATRICE.

And pray whose fault was it that you were without a house and home? Who took the inheritance of your great-aunt Sumner from you?

RUDOLPH.

My great-aunt had a right to do as she pleased with her property, and my uncle was her nephew as well as my father.

BEATRICE.

Ah, but your father was the oldest, and the old lady's darling. Her first will was in his favour.

RUDOLPH.

She changed her mind then.

BEATRICE.

To be sure, your honoured father was but a spendthrift, as one may say——

RUDOLPH.

How now, Beatrice?

BEATRICE.

But I would wager, and so would many a one besides, that all was not right about that second will.

RUDOLPH.

What! the old story again? an old wife's gossip!

BEATRICE.

Whenever I think of it, and think that, perhaps, if all had been right, you would be our master here instead of—Oh, oh! let me hold my tongue!

RUDOLPH.

So best—I'm sure I do not hinder you.

BEATRICE.

Do not be angry—I nursed you in these arms a child; and if it be as I suspect—well—I say nothing—only this I *do* say—the unrighteous man shall come to judgment. Ill got, ill spent.

RUDOLPH.

Have you done? So now go get me breakfast—I'm sure I've earned it, listening to all this nonsense.

BEATRICE.

Well, well, I say no more. (*Aside.*) This is always the way, if one says a word about it. (*Aloud.*) Did you go down to see the poor keeper yesterday?

RUDOLPH.

No.

BEATRICE.

Nor the day before?

RUDOLPH.

No—he is well again, and able to sit up.

BEATRICE.

Ay—but you used to go and play cribbage with him.*

RUDOLPH.

I've left off playing cribbage.

BEATRICE.

And you used to take him the newspaper every morning.

RUDOLPH.

I send it by little Peter.

BEATRICE (*smiling*).

And how does that please his daughter, pretty Mistress Peggy? I fancy she is not so well satisfied with your absence.

RUDOLPH.

And even therefore 'tis I do absent myself—

* Tarock is the German game.

you, my good Beatrice, are an elderly, discreet woman—you have been like a mother to me, and I dont care if I do tell you the truth. See you Beatrice—

I am no vain fool, I trust—no prating boaster
Where women are concerned; but I did think
This pretty girl had some kind thoughts of me.
I'm not such a novice, but I can translate
A look—a blush:
And—I—you know—a young fellow like myself,
Could but be flattered by the preference—
But marry her? No!—to come to that extremity,
She must please me better than in truth she does.
Now, in such case, what were the consequence
Of daily visits to the keeper's lodge?
"What feeling man—nay, I will say, what *honest* man
"Would trifle with a helpless woman's heart,
"Or her good name? And there be moments, Beatrice,
"And circumstances, when our best resolves
"Do melt like frost i' the fire." I might be tempted
To play the wooer—and this good, innocent girl

Be led to cherish, through unfounded hopes,
A fancy into a passion, and refuse
Some suitable match in her own rank of life;
And when she saw—that—that—in short, good
Beatrice,
I thought it better and more honourable
To go no more—and that's the truth.

BEATRICE (*wiping her eyes*).

I always said that there were few—very few like you, and happy's the woman whose blessed lot it shall be to partake yours!

RUDOLPH.

That happy woman, my dear good Beatrice, dwells in the moon—for the earth holds her not. What *I would* have, is not for me—what *I might* have, still less.

Enter EDWARD (*hastily*).

EDWARD.

Do I see you once more, my dear, true-hearted cousin?

RUDOLPH.

My dear, dear Edward! (*They embrace.*) And did you, then, think of me sometimes on your travels?

EDWARD.

Surely! can you doubt it?

RUDOLPH.

Yet, if you had *not*, it would not have been

surprising, methinks; what could you have seen or heard at Prague, to bring your country cousin to your mind?

BEATRICE.

Prague must be a fine place, by all accounts.

EDWARD.

Ah, Dame Beatrice, how fares it with you? I heard the people below calling after you most vociferously.

BEATRICE.

O—ay—about the state-rooms. I had well nigh forgotten them, in good faith—but when once I begin to talk, I'm apt to forget my business. That's a fault—a great one—but Lord save us! talking is an old woman's only comfort. [*Exit.*

EDWARD.

An old gossip! Will she come back again?

RUDOLPH.

Not for an hour or more—they are all busy—and you can tell me now all that I wish to hear—that is, if you can spare the time.

EDWARD.

O Rudolph! 'twas delicious at Prague! I wish you had been there.

RUDOLPH (*smiling*).

I should have cut but a sorry figure among your gay friends in the capital.

EDWARD.

Why, to be sure, you are a little behind the fashion—you do a little smack, as it were, of the country bumpkin—and then your shyness whenever you have to speak to a well-dressed woman—ha! ha! ha!

RUDOLPH.

If ever I visit Prague, it will be to see the glorious edifices—the palaces—the churches—the monuments of antiquity——

EDWARD.

Of old Queen Libussa, wouldst thou say?* Alas! my good coz, I had no time for dingy old churches; there were too many pretty young Madonnas!

RUDOLPH.

Our people here have settled it, that you are to bring us home a Bohemian wife from Prague?

EDWARD.

'Tis not impossible—nor even improbable.

RUDOLPH.

Indeed! you have then made a choice?

EDWARD.

Perhaps I have!

Libu ssa, a Bohemian heroine of the middle ages, is supposed to have founded Prague in 722. In the old traditions of Bohemia she figures as a sorceress, as well as a queen and warrior.

RUDOLPH

You happy fellow! and is she beautiful, Edward?

EDWARD.

In my eyes, she is.

RUDOLPH.

I need not ask if she be good and true,
For such she must be, if you love her, Edward!
And rich, perhaps?

EDWARD.

The greatest heiress in Prague

RUDOLPH.

And noble?

EDWARD.

A countess—and no less!

RUDOLPH.

And loves you truly?

EDWARD.

As I believe!

RUDOLPH.

Why, thou happiest of men! but you deserve it all! I envy you not, dear Edward—on mine honour, not.

EDWARD.

But, Rudolph, would you not like to find some good pretty girl for yourself—eh?—one who——

RUDOLPH.

O Edward! I have had such visions,
When I have sat alone by the winter fire,
A gentle wife to welcome me at evening,
With looks and words of love, and children's voices,
And all the angel comforts of a home!
But I may put such thoughts out of my mind—
They are not for me!

EDWARD.

Why not?

RUDOLPH.

A poor fellow like myself, without a farthing in the world——

EDWARD.

May venture on marriage the more securely; for he may feel assured that where he is chosen, 'tis for his own sake alone; while a rich man, on the contrary—(*pauses.*) If you but knew, Rudolph, how often I have been mortified by the thought that I have owed the smiles of youth and beauty only to my advantages of birth and fortune!

RUDOLPH.

Nay, coz, you are too modest!

EDWARD.

Ha! ha! my modesty ne'er stood in my way, methinks.

RUDOLPH.

Have you not, besides your large fortune, every quality of mind and person that may win a woman's heart? Ah, had I but your form—your winning tongue—your grace i' the dance!

EDWARD.

Why, in faith, my dear coz, when I look in the glass and compare myself with others, I am vain enough to think I might be loved for my own sake,—but ere I venture on matrimony, I must have the assured conviction of it.

RUDOLPH.

And, with your intended bride, have you this assured conviction?

EDWARD.

Why, I have put her to the proof, and may with reason believe that I am loved for myself alone.

RUDOLPH.

I would fain know what proof,
In such a case, would satisfy a man,
Beyond that sweetest proof, which words and looks,
Warm from an honest heart, would carry with them!
What is your proof?

EDWARD.

Hush!—my father knows not a word of it yet.

RUDOLPH.

O then, as I guess, some lover's folly!—come! I'll shrive you.

EDWARD.

This very day he must know all, and you too, cousin—for, in regard to you, I am not wholly blameless; I confess it.

RUDOLPH.

Why, what have I to do with it?

EDWARD.

Do not start—'tis nothing—a mere jest—matter for laughter when we talk together. To-day, after dinner, we'll take a turn in the garden, and there I'll tell you all:—and hark ye, Rudolph, when you would marry, tell me: I'll speak to my father—he shall find something in that way to suit you. Why, man, he has lately made the acquaintance of one Von Holberg, an honest fellow—blest in five fair daughters, who have passed all their lives in their father's old castle in the country, waiting like so many enchanted damsels for some knight to release them from durance—ha, ha, ha! Possibly we might arrange something for you—what say you, coz?

RUDOLPH.

Possibly—but when my time comes, I will choose a wife for myself. I thank you, coz!

Enter the BARON.

BARON.

Rudolph! good-morrow to you. How goes it with you, boy?

RUDOLPH (*kissing his hand*).

O well! can it be otherwise when I see again my dear kind father? Welcome—welcome home!

BARON.

Rudolph, where were you when I arrived this morning?

RUDOLPH.

At Feldkirchen: the farmhouse there will be roofed in next week. Will you allow me, father, to come over this evening, and lay my year's accounts before you? We sold our wool off last October fair at a good price—fifteen dollars the pack.

BARON.

You are diligent in your calling.

RUDOLPH.

I would fain be so for your sake, my father—my benefactor!

BARON.

Benefactor! pooh—nonsense—are you not my brother's son, and by adoption, mine? I have done my duty, no more: your father's folly and extravagance are not your fault; he——

RUDOLPH.

Leave my poor father to rest in peace, good uncle!—he was a kind man, as I have heard.

BARON.

Kind! yes—but thoughtless, a spendthrift fool—a very profligate.
Had he inherited my aunt Sumner's fortune,
He had seen the end on't long before his death:
And you no better off than you are now—
Be sure of that!

RUDOLPH.

Of one thing I am sure—he was my father,
And from no other lips——

BARON.

Well, well—know this—'tis happy for you, nephew—
The fortune fell to me—for thus I have been
Enabled to provide for you—you are
Content with your lot in life?

RUDOLPH.

Most certainly.

BARON.

And never would have been, by your own choice,
Anything different from what you are?—speak!

RUDOLPH.

I own there was a time when I much wished to have gone into the army.

BARON.

And you wish it still?

RUDOLPH.

No, no—I do not—did not *then*, when once
I had reflected. My ambition, father,
Is of another temper:
What service had I done you in the army?
What honour gained for myself? In time of peace,
A man may surely spend his life far better
Than at parade and drill; but let war come,
I'll beat my ploughshare into a sword, and show you
How I can fight for you, my home, my country,
These fields which I have sown!

BARON.

You are content then?

RUDOLPH.

I am.

BARON.

'Tis well; content, my son,
Is our best good on earth—and one, believe me,
Which riches cannot buy; no—on the contrary! (*sighs.*)
Wouldst thou be richer than thou art?

RUDOLPH (*smiling*).

Why, truly, father, a little more would be no harm!

BARON.

Indeed! well—I will think of it, some time or other. Now go! and leave me with my son alone—I have to speak with him. (*As Rudolph goes.*) Stay Rudolph—from the price of the wool of which you spoke erewhile, keep for yourself a hundred dollars—do you hear?

RUDOLPH.

A hundred dollars!—for what, dear father?

BARON.

For your good management—good everything!

RUDOLPH.

My dear father! you do not think that what I said just now—(*Taking the Baron's hand, which he withdraws coldly.*)

BARON.

I think nothing—'tis yours: now leave us.

RUDOLPH.

A thousand thanks! Doubt not that I shall know
Right well to spend it! (*To Edward.*) Farewell for a while
We'll meet in the garden. [*Exit.*

BARON.

A thoughtless jolterhead is this boy Rudolph,
And ever will be!

EDWARD.

A good, foolish fellow; blunt, but honest.

BARON.

And never had been fit for aught on earth
But what he is—a clown.

EDWARD.

I don't know that; he is not so stupid either, and had he not been brought up here among your peasants——

BARON.

What then? he had been by chance
A ragged scholar, or a silly officer?
No; Nature stamped him for the plough; however,
We may do something better for him—in time.

EDWARD.

Truly I hope so; for, after all,
He is your nephew and my cousin, father!

BARON.

True—and would you believe it, Ned, but for your sake, this fortune I inherited from your aunt Sumner were nought to me but bitterness and vexation?

EDWARD.

Why so, father?

BARON.

I have had no peace since it fell to me. The prejudice in favour of the first-born seems to exist in the very nature of man, and every one envies a younger brother any extraordinary good fortune. Do they not say that I contrived to set my aunt against my brother—nay, took advantage of her dotage?—Dotage! did she not speak coherently and sensibly to her last breath? had I not good and sufficient witnesses to prove that her last will was made, she being of sound mind!—and yet they dare to say——

EDWARD.

What signifies what they say, since you have a clear conscience, and, what is better, a clear estate? Let them talk!

BARON.

Ay, as you say, let them talk; they cannot talk me out of the Thalberg estates; and yet—and yet—it wrings me at the heart that I should be a rich man at my kinsman's cost.

EDWARD.

Why, then, give Rudolph something from your
riches,
And, trust me, father, the more you give to him,
The better pleased am I.

BARON.

Indeed! so I would have it. Look you, Edward, this is one reason why I wish your marriage with the Countess Leistenfeld were settled. She is rich—*rich!* With her fortune, the estate of Thalberg, and twenty thousand dollars in hand, you may have one of the most splendid establishments in the capital; and then, Ned, suppose—just suppose—I were to make over this little property here to Rudolph?—after my death, I mean.

EDWARD (*in amazement*)

This estate! You jest, my lord!

BARON.

Such a disposition of my fortune might indeed cause some wonder; but I care not for the world's wonder, or its censure—no—nor yours either, sir. I tell you plainly, if I could think you base and niggardly——

EDWARD.

I—niggardly! I would to heaven that the tradesmen and tavern-keepers could say as much for me, and then you had not been called on so

often to pay my debts. Ha! ha! ha! your pardon; but at that word niggard I must expire—ha! ha! Edward von Thürmer a miser!

BARON.

If it be not so, you will not surely envy your poor fool of a cousin——

EDWARD.

Envy!—*him?* I was only astonished at the magnificence of your generosity. 'Tis allowable, I presume, my lord?

BARON (*hesitating*).

I should think that, when in possession of this estate, he would be satisfied?

EDWARD.

Satisfied!!—why I should think so, truly!

BARON.

I don't suppose his spendthrift father would have left him the value of this single estate out of the whole property?

EDWARD.

Hardly, if all be true that men say of him.

BARON.

And more had only been a hurt and hindrance
To one of Rudolph's nature;
So my mind's easy; and from this time forth
We'll speak no more of it—the thing is settled.
(*Pause.*) The Countess Leistenfeld arrives to-day—
You understand each other?

EDWARD (*smiling*).

Yes, and—*no !*

BARON.

You fright me, boy ! I will not hear of *no !*

EDWARD.

You have her father's promise, have you not ?

BARON.

I have—conditionally,

EDWARD.

And I—the daughter's heart without condition.

BARON.

You are ever so chary of your words, when I would question you of your sojourn in Prague——

EDWARD.

Why, I might tell my tale like Cæsar—came, saw, and conquered ! Cheer up, and think all's done !

BARON.

Coxcomb and braggart as you are, I know not what to think ! That the Count should never yet have answered the letter which I gave you for him, nor, in that which announces his arrival, once mention your visit, seems most strange.

EDWARD.

And is, notwithstanding, very simple ; for, in the first place, I never gave him your letter.

BARON.

Youngster! beware!

EDWARD.

And as to my visit, the Count has no idea that he has seen your son, and the young Countess is equally in the dark.

BARON.

What is all this?

EDWARD.

To present myself as your heir, as the bridegroom elect, appeared far too prosaic and commonplace. I wished to know for once what I was worth in a young maiden's eyes; and when I appeared in Prague, it was under the name, and with no other pretensions, than those of my cousin.

BARON.

Of Rudolph?

EDWARD.

Did you not observe that, during the first few days after my return, I hardly answered to the name of Edward?

BARON.

I cannot say I did; for often when I speak, it is as though you heard not.

EDWARD.

Well, in the character of my poor country cousin, I played off a whole battery of love-

making against the lady, and not without effect.

BARON.

Thou art mad, or dreaming!

EDWARD.

And then from time to time I would put on an air of the profoundest melancholy; you know not, father, how charming, in the eyes of a sentimental young girl, is the disconsolate air of a poor orphan youth, dying of concealed love!

BARON.

O lord! O lord!—well, sir, go on.

EDWARD.

I soon found that I had gained her attention; in society her eye followed me: if she spoke, there was an unwonted softness in her voice, a certain expression of anxiety and tender pity: at the balls she encouraged me to dance—to converse—persuaded her father to invite me to his house, contrived that I should be included in all their parties of pleasure, and, as I heard from the best authority, made the most minute inquiries into my conduct and character;—in short, the interest she felt for me was not to be mistaken, and my triumph was complete.

BARON.

Did you declare your love?

EDWARD.

By sighs, by meaning looks, but not by words.

BARON.

And what, think you, will be the consequence, when in the supposed nephew she discovers my son?

EDWARD.

The consequence? Only the most delicious, the most romantic scene—sublime!—but we must not disclose her error too soon—too suddenly; The surprise, the rapture, might be too much for the dear girl; and then I own I should like to see a little of the struggle between duty and inclination —see her lamenting—pining for her supposed Rudolph! O, without that, my triumph were still imperfect!

BARON.

It must not, shall not be;—the moment they arrive, I will let the father, ay, and the daughter, know ——

EDWARD.

Good heavens, you will not do it, my dear father!—do not so cross your son!—spoil my romance?——

BARON.

If through these boyish tricks the match should fail, I tell thee, Ned, thy father will go mad!

EDWARD.

And the son too—for the girl pleases me; but we'll not fail—no fear! my dear, dear father! Come, you have been *so* indulgent—have o'erlooked so many follies—give me my way but this once more, and I will promise for one whole year to be a very model of discretion. I will neither touch a billiard-ball—nor wager a ducat —nor ride your best horses till they are blown —I swear it: does this promise win you? it does —it does! and I will keep it fairly—
So come along—huzza! for this one day
The father figures in his son's new play!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*Changes to a room in a farmhouse, plainly but not meanly furnished. In the background two doors, and before one of them a large old-fashioned screen; on the one side a small bookcase, and on the other a writing-table with papers and account-books.*

RUDOLPH—*alone, looking at a rouleau of gold, which he holds in his hand.*

RUDOLPH.

A hundred dollars, after all, don't go quite so far as I thought—but can purchase pleasure, how much, I never knew before! Yes, I can understand, better than ever, why men are so eager in the pursuit of riches. A rich man must needs be

a happy man, if he can see around him every day as many joyous faces as I have seen to-day. (*Counts his money*). Now I have just forty dollars—enough to pay the schooling of Leonard's children, and the apprentice fee for the schoolmaster's son—and then there will be just enough left to buy the cloth for a new coat. Old Beatrice tells me that my uncle expects visiters: he must not be ashamed of me. (*A knocking at the door.*) Who knocks there?—come in.

Enter COUNT LEISTENFELD, *followed by the* COUNTESS MARIE.

COUNT.

May I take the liberty?

RUDOLPH.

Whom have I the honour to receive?

COUNT.

A good friend of the family—for I presume you are one of Baron von Thürmer's people? his steward? his bailiff?

RUDOLPH (*with surprise*).

His steward?—at your service. Do you wish to be announced to his lordship?

COUNT.

Heaven forbid! I would entreat you rather, my very good friend, to conceal our arrival—for, look you, (*showing a rent in his sleeve,*) we must

change our dress before we venture to present ourselves at the castle: we have just had a most unlucky accident.

RUDOLPH.

An accident!

COUNT.

Our carriage has broken down, and lies yonder in the middle of the road just outside the village: have you a smith at hand?

RUDOLPH.

Not a hundred yards from the castle, in the red house yonder—I'll seek him instantly.

COUNT.

And can you procure a couple of stout fellows, that while the smith is at work would bring our baggage up here?

RUDOLPH.

Certainly.

COUNT.

I hope we shall not put you to much inconvenience, if we remain here meanwhile?

RUDOLPH.

Not in the least—if you can be content with such poor welcome as my house can offer: pray take a chair.

COUNT.

Excuse me.

RUDOLPH.

I entreat, (*brings forward an arm-chair*); the young lady looks quite pale.

MARIE (*sinking into the chair*).

'Tis nothing—only I was a *little* frightened.

RUDOLPH.

Shall I bring you a glass of water?

MARIE.

I thank you, no—I feel already better.

RUDOLPH (*to the Count*).

With whom did you leave your carriage?

COUNT.

Her waiting-maid and the men-servants are there keeping guard.

MARIE.

Pray, good sir, have the kindness to take care of our trunks—all my little finery is at stake—and pray take especial care of my bonnet-box, that it is not thrown upside down.

RUDOLPH (*bows and turns to the Count*).

Is the lady your daughter?

COUNT.

My daughter.

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

She's beautiful as heaven! (*To Marie*). I will take good care that nothing shall be injured.

[*Bows and exit.*

MARIE.

Really, a very obliging, civilised sort of person!

COUNT.

A good fellow—I'll give him something handsome. (*Sits down*). Ah, I begin to feel that I have had a shake too. That fool of a postilion! to drive like mad over the cross-roads till the axle-tree snapped in two!

MARIE.

You were so urgent with him to drive fast—faster—and so often promised him double pay—

COUNT (*rises abruptly, and walks about*).

Those fellows always jump from one extreme to another, and know no medium between creeping and galloping. Double pay! confound him, does he expect to be paid for my torn coat and bruised shins? and, worse than all, here will be an end of my excellent scheme for surprising our old friend here. If once the report of our accident is spread through the village, it will soon reach the castle, and then— what is the hour?

MARIE.

Only twelve, papa.

COUNT.

That's well; they don't expect us at the castle till after three—so there is time yet, if we are not betrayed, to trim ourselves up, and present

ourselves in state. How do you feel, Marie, at the thought of our visit?

MARIE.

Not *very* uneasy, papa;—and you?

COUNT.

Right glad at heart! A thousand times have I thanked heaven that I had the power of engaging your hand before you were fifteen, and so was released at once from all the cares of careful fathers, ere they have provided a husband for an only daughter.

MARIE.

Not that I think that in any case I should have wanted lovers, papa.

COUNT.

Wanted them, say you? why, all I feared was the being beset and overwhelmed with lovers, beaux, danglers, ballad-mongers, and such gentry. And then one had been too young, t'other too old, one too dull, another too witty—one too rich another too poor; and then we should have had such heaps of love-letters, proposals, duels and declarations, sonnets and serenades, I should have been plagued out of my wits. Now you know, I hate to be annoyed——

MARIE (*smiling*).

True, papa.

COUNT.

Peace—peace and quietness are the only things worth living for. It is out of my love of peace that I never care to know what is going forward in my own house—not even what is for dinner. I have settled all beforehand with the old Baron—to save trouble, you are to be betrothed here, and married at Prague. Then I shall spend every summer with you in the country, you will spend the winters with me in town. Without my steward, my chamberlain, and my secretary, you know I cannot exist—

MARIE.

To the great advantage of the said three gentlemen.

COUNT.

They say this young Thürmer is a well-bred cavalier.

MARIE.

And they add, somewhat extravagant and self-conceited.

COUNT.

Ay, but they add, too, he has a right good heart.

MARIE.

Well, we are now to know him!
And if he prove, as I do hope he may,

Worthy my love, he shall my husband be!
Out of caprice or lightly, my dear father,
I promise you that I will not withdraw
The word you plighted for me: there may come
Considerations of a higher nature——

COUNT.

What mean you, Marie? I tell you all was considered seven years ago. Considerations!—what considerations?

MARIE.

That, dearest papa, is for the present a secret.

COUNT.

A secret! then I'll have nothing to do with it:—by my faith, secrets are seldom of an agreeable kind!

MARIE.

Trust to me, dear father; you know I never concealed anything from you but what I thought would annoy you.

COUNT.

I know it well, Marie; you are a good girl, and have spared me many an unquiet hour. If I thought this marriage would not be for your happiness——(*Pause.*) Your heart is free? (*Pause, she looks embarrassed.*) Sure you can say thus much?—Marie!

MARIE (*hesitating*).

My heart? why—yes, papa—at least I hope so.

COUNT.

Now in Heaven's name——!

MARIE.

O don't look so frightened!

COUNT (*walking about in a heat*).

Ay, ay—that young Rudolph, the cousin of your intended—he that came so oft to visit us at Prague, and cast up his eyes and sighed to the moon, and made such whimpering faces as we sat at dinner, I expected every moment to see the tears drop into his soup—that sentimental puppy—you had no dislike to him?

MARIE.

Why should I dislike him?

COUNT.

No turnings! so it had been better. He interested you?

MARIE (*with animation*).

I can't deny it.

COUNT.

Confess he does so still—a little?

MARIE.

Nay, not a little; for, to speak truth, I think of him the livelong day.

COUNT (*with terror*).

The livelong day?

MARIE.

And all the livelong night—except when I'm asleep.

COUNT.

Marie!——

MARIE.

O don't look so alarmed? what does it signify?

COUNT.

What does it signify? to come here to marry one man, and love another?

MARIE.

Love! I love Rudolph Thürmer! did I say so? —papa, you frighten me. No, once indeed I fancied it, and then I felt again quite sure I did not—no, O no! I do not—or if—or if—the very least bit in the world, believe me.

COUNT.

And yet you think of him all day, and what's far worse, all night?

MARIE.

Because one thinks of a man, must one needs love him? I hope not so—for I should think of Rudolph, though I had never seen him. O believe me, father, 'tis quite another thing from what you guess. Let us change the subject. I would ask you—but then you must not take my

question in an ill sense—if I marry the Baron Edward, what is to be my marriage portion?

COUNT.

A hundred thousand dollars down, and heiress, besides, to my possessions.

MARIE (*clasping her hands*).

O delightful!

COUNT.

Does it so please you?

MARIE.

O not for my own sake—no!—but do not ask me why—it is *my* secret.

COUNT.

You are, and ever will be, a little fool!

MARIE.

You are, and ever will be, the best of fathers!

[*The clock strikes.*

COUNT.

What says the clock?

MARIE.

'Tis half past twelve.

COUNT.

I must go see what they are about, or we shall have them taking our baggage, and laying it down under the very windows of the castle.

MARIE.

Do not tire yourself, papa!

COUNT.

I must move about, lest I get stiff with these bruises. [*Exit.*

MARIE (*alone, after a pause*).

Love Rudolph Thürmer? no, I won't believe it,
Though it be true he interests, occupies me
More than man ever did before — poor Rudolph!
Pity, they say, is near akin to love,
And I do pity him.
And then the thought that in me lies the power
To change his fortune, to restore his rights,
Gives me a feeling for him—as though I were
His guardian angel, and he by Heaven thrown
On my protection. (*Pauses.*) Why did Braun trust me?
It is a strange position I am placed in.
My father must know nothing till 'tis over,
Or he will fret himself into an illness;
And, besides him, whom know I that is fit
To be entrusted with a hideous secret,
Involving both the honour of the dead
And fate of the living? In this most difficult task,
To which a simple woman could be called,
I must take counsel of mine own heart alone—
And better so; the path is plain before me ;

I see it now, as clear as truth can make it.
None shall beguile me to the right or left,
With subtle reasonings and coward fears;
No — mine own conscience be my guide — my judge,
And Heaven will bless the end! (*Pauses.*)
Poor Rudolph! is he
Still in Bohemia? or by this time returned?
(*Pause.*)
And yet I am not sure if I should wish
To find him here; and yet—why not?
This trial failing, then my intended husband
Is proved most worthless. I am at once released,
And free to love—to marry where I will.
If it succeeds, and Edward Thürmer prove
A man of honour, as I hope he will,
Then Rudolph will be happy; and methinks
That as a happy and a prosperous man
He will not be so dangerous to my peace.
Yet here I am, thinking of him again!
My father was i' the right—it is not fit—
I will o'erlook the library of our host,
I may find something
To turn the busy current of my thoughts.
[*She goes to the book-case.*
What have we here? "The Farmer's Journal."—
"On planting;"—"The Art of Fattening Cattle"—

ah!—but here above is something different: "History of the Jews," the Odyssey and Iliad, Schiller, Shakspeare: our host, the Bailiff, has had, it seems, some education. Sweet Shakspeare!

Who never failed to charm me from myself,
Must help me now. [*Sits and reads.*

Enter RUDOLPH (*he bows*).

RUDOLPH.

I have taken the liberty to show your father to my room; your trunks and boxes are on the way and in safe keeping, and your waiting-maid will attend you on the instant. Is there aught else that you will honour me by commanding?

MARIE.

I am truly ashamed to cause you all this trouble.

RUDOLPH.

'Tis with the best good-will—in faith it is. I would that every day a carriage might break down before my door that held such travellers—and no more hurt done. You have been reading, lady?

MARIE.

Pray pardon my indiscretion, but I found here a friend—Shakspeare. (*Showing the book.*)

RUDOLPH.

You love him, then! charming! for do you know
He pleases me of all things?
I don't well understand
All the fine things the critics say about him,
But to understand *him* it needs but to be human,
And have a heart and soul.

MARIE.

You love reading, it seems?

RUDOLPH.

Yes, truly, but I've little time for reading;
Therefore take care to read but what is best.

MARIE.

Then you read *much*, although not many books. (*After a pause.*) You must feel very lonely here?

RUDOLPH.

Lonely! why so?

MARIE.

You can have but little congenial intercourse with those around you.

RUDOLPH.

Pardon me—the intercourse with our peasantry is by no means so devoid of interest as you seem to think; these people, with their untutored minds, have often most sound and excellent

sense. Then our priest, with whom I spend my Sundays, is a good and learned man.

MARIE.

Are you married?

RUDOLPH (*smiling*).

Not yet.

MARIE.

You smile—perhaps you are about to marry?

RUDOLPH.

I? no, indeed! I smiled—it was a passing thought; but you, I presume, will marry?

MARIE.

That's as my destiny and my stars may rule it.

RUDOLPH.

You have—I pray you pardon me the freedom—perhaps a lover?

MARIE.

A lover? no, indeed!

RUDOLPH (*with animation*).

No? (*timidly.*) But suitors, maybe?

MARIE.

O that's a different thing!
We women, sir, a nice distinction draw
Between a lover and a suitor. Suitors have I!

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

There! I thought so.

MARIE.

What is the matter?

RUDOLPH.

The matter?—nothing—nothing in the world!

MARIE.

A strange man this! (*Aside.*) Your lord here, the Baron von Thürmer, is an old friend of my father's. What kind of man is he?

RUDOLPH.

O, an excellent man! His countenance, 'tis true, is not at first attractive, but once get over that, you'll like him dearly.

MARIE.

And his son, Baron Edward, is he here at present?

RUDOLPH.

He is.

MARIE.

What's your opinion of him—frankly?

RUDOLPH (*hesitating*).

He is not unworthy of his blood and lineage.

MARIE.

A little wild, or so?

RUDOLPH.

He is young and rich.

MARIE.

Somewhat self-conceited?

RUDOLPH.

Nay, he may stand excused—he is thought handsome.

MARIE.

And has committed follies—not a few, they say?

RUDOLPH (*smiling*).

Would you trust to the wisdom of a man who had never committed a folly in his life?

MARIE.

But you hold him as one incapable of a dishonourable act?

RUDOLPH.

Myself not more so!

MARIE.

Fond of money?

RUDOLPH.

Fond of spending it!

MARIE.

I thank you—that is all I wish to know.

[*She turns away thoughtfully.*

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

Can this be Edward's bride? O no, no, no! I will not think it—dare not!

MARIE (*aside*).

This host of ours is sure no common person. I must, if we remain here, seek his acquaintance, and find out his history.

Enter LISETTE (*with a bandbox*).

MARIE.

Ah, Lisette! you are come?

LISETTE.

Yes, my lady, I am come; but, O my lady! I've been in such a flutter—such a twitteration!

MARIE.

What's the matter?

LISETTE.

What with the fright, and the overset, and all, I took on so after you were gone, and I was so nervous, if this good man here had not got me something from the inn, I should have been *unnilated*.

MARIE.

Are our trunks arrived?

LISETTE.

Yes, my lady; but now I look at you, your dress has escaped finely; so, if your ladyship pleases, I'll just do your hair up, and throw your scarf round you.

RUDOLPH.

Command all here—I take my leave.

MARIE (*smiling*).

Poor man! you will have reason to remember the luckless travellers who have thus invaded you!

RUDOLPH (*looking at her*).

I fear me, too much reason—pardon me. (*He bows. Aside as he goes off.*) Poor Rudolph! shut, shut your eyes—your heart—
'Tis a rich hot-house flower, and all unfit
To be transplanted to a poor man's garden!

[*Exit.*

MARIE—LISETTE.

LISETTE.

Soh! this is the bailiff's room then?

MARIE.

Good man! we have actually driven him from his own house.

LISETTE.

Nay, my lady, don't mind him; such a country-bred fellow has not every day the luck to receive a fair lady within his doors. Please you sit down—I'll bring a looking-glass.

[*The Countess sits down before the table; Lisette takes off her cap and bonnet; then takes out her comb, so that her hair falls over her shoulders.*

MARIE.

Must you take my hair down?

LISETTE.

O my lady! you forget that you are to be presented to your intended bridegroom: the first impression is everything, you know. (*After a*

pause.) I wonder is his cousin, Baron Rudolph, here?

MARIE.

For aught I know or care.

LISETTE.

Poor dear young man! O my lady! how desperate he was in love with you!

MARIE.

So it seemed at one time; but men have all such ways.

LISETTE.

Apropos to men, this bailiff here, our host, is not ill-looking.

MARIE.

Far from it; he has a fine open countenance, and is not without some sense and education. I fancy he has come of good parentage.

LISETTE.

Is he unmarried?

MARIE (*turning round*).

Lisette!—why, what is that to you?

LISETTE.

Why, my lady, I was just thinking that, if we are to remain in the country, I should be tempted to set my cap at him; the house (*looking round*) is pretty well, and the man too, considering——

MARIE.

You!—you marry this farmer?

LISETTE.

Why not, my lady? In the country men are scarce: one must not be too particular. To be sure, he hasn't the air—the—the—*je ne sais quoi* of my last lover, Mr. Henry; but he's like to make a more substantial husband, and I hope I should have your ladyship's good word.

MARIE.

Your tongue runs apace, Lisette. [*A knocking.*

LISETTE.

Ah, some one knocks! [*Knocking.*

MARIE.

Again! they are coming in! I cannot be seen thus—

[*She springs up and runs behind the screen; Lisette snatches up the bandbox, and runs after her.*

MARIE—LISETTE (*behind the screen*).

Enter GRIMES, *looking about.*

GRIMES.

Heaven grant I find him!—my last hope is in him. He must come down with it—*must!*—and he will, for he's good-hearted, and never yet could keep his money when he had it. No one to be seen?—in his own room perhaps. (*Goes to the door, and knocks.*) Squire!—your honour!—(*knocks*)—one word, please your honour!

MARIE (*peeping out*).

His honour!

LISETTE.

No farmer, then?

MARIE.

Perhaps some young gentleman who has come here to study agriculture. [*They draw back.*

Enter RUDOLPH *from an inner room.*

RUDOLPH.

Madam!——Ah! 'tis only you, good Grimes; I thought——

GRIMES.

Ay, 'tis only me, a miserable man—and ruined! unless you send me hence with help and comfort.

RUDOLPH.

What has happened?—you look wildly.

GRIMES.

I was yesterday with my landlord, that old miserly Baron Stiller; I was to have paid him two hundred dollars; but what with bad seasons, and my increasing family, and one thing or another, I could only make up one hundred.

RUDOLPH.

That was bad.

GRIMES.

I told him how it wasn't bad management, but

just ill luck, and nothing else, that made me behindhand. I told him to what ruin myself, my wife, my children—all, must come, if I must leave my farm—in vain: I must pay, or go.

RUDOLPH.

I must tell you fairly, my poor friend, that in all this you are not without fault. Remember what I told you—but, no! 'tis cruel *now*. I am grieved for you, and were it in my power to help you——

GRIMES.

O sir, it is! You can—you *will* be my good angel! See you, sir, I came down here just to tell you of my mischance; for I knew you would pity me; but in the village I hear that, only this morning, you received from our old lord a great rich present—a sum, perhaps, you will spend or waste—who knows? and me and mine it would redeem from ruin. If you would lend it to me for one year—only *one* year—I would repay it honestly.

RUDOLPH.

Is it one hundred dollars you want?

GRIMES.

Less were of no use.

RUDOLPH.

And if you have them not?

GRIMES.

I am a ruined man: my poor wife must go to service, and my children go beg on the highways.

RUDOLPH.

Oh, why did you not come to me but an hour sooner?

GRIMES.

Do you mean to say that all is gone?

RUDOLPH.

I have but forty dollars left out of a hundred.

GRIMES.

Then Heaven forgive you! See how great people trifle away sums that would build up poor men's houses!

RUDOLPH.

Grimes! I can pardon much to your present misery; but I would have you know I have not lightly squandered away my money; I'm poor myself, and know its value; fifty dollars did I give to poor old Victor to buy his only son off from the militia; and ten dollars went to poor Lena, whose cow died last week; so I have only forty left. I did intend——but 'tis all over now; Here, take what I can give, and try if you can find out some good soul that will for charity make up the remainder.

GRIMES (*pushing the money away*).

Nay, let it go after the rest! half help is no help. I beg your pardon, sir, that I have troubled you in vain.

RUDOLPH.

Grimes, you do not think that I deceive you? Ask Victor—ask old Lena.

GRIMES.

What right have I to call you to account, sir? You have done what you pleased with your own. Perhaps some of these days you'll hear talk of a poor drowned body pulled out of the river; such things, sir, happen every day. Who minds 'em?

RUDOLPH (*sternly*).

Grimes, I am sorry I must say it——

GRIMES.

What, sir?

RUDOLPH.

You're a bad man—a heartless, worthless fellow!

GRIMES (*recoiling*).

If I do it, it is because I'm driven to it.

RUDOLPH.

You will do no such thing. When men do harbour in their brain—
Driven wild by misery—such deadly projects,
They do not prate of them. You'd frighten me

Because you do believe I have the money,
And yet refuse it, and you think that fear
Will grant what pity has denied.
You see I know you, fellow, and I know
You will go hence, and boast your cunning—laugh
At my too easy nature; but it matters not:
You are most miserable, and the more—not less so—
As you are more unworthy. Then your wife
And helpless children. (*Opens a drawer.*) Here, take this diamond ring, this watch—all my poor father left me; any one will lend you sixty dollars on them until I can redeem them—as I will.

[*Marie, who has been gradually stealing from behind the screen during the last speech, makes a sign to Lisette, who goes out through the door in the back ground, and then steps forward, and stops Rudolph's hand.*

MARIE.

Grimes is this good man's name?

RUDOLPH.

You here, madam?

MARIE.

Is your name Grimes?

GRIMES.

Jacob Grimes, an' please you.

MARIE.

Farmer on the estate of old Baron Stiller?

GRIMES.

The same.

MARIE.

I thought so. (*Hurriedly.*) Then 'tis to you I am commissioned, by one who knows you, to pay you a sum of money.

[*She places a purse in his hands, and turns away quickly; Rudolph follows her, snatches her hand, and kisses it.*

MARIE.

O you're a noble creature!

[*She hurries out after Lisette; Rudolph stands looking after her with delight, Grimes with astonishment.*

The curtain falls.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE—*An apartment in the castle.*

Enter the COUNT, *and the* COUNTESS MARIE, *cautiously. The* COUNT *is in a rich military costume, wearing his orders; the* COUNTESS *in an elegant undress.*

COUNT.

Well, we have stolen in thus far, like thieves in the night! How little does my old friend think that his expected guests are already beneath his roof! O what a superexcellent jest 'twould be to meet old Thürmer in his morning gown and slippers—we thus pranked up! Spite of the bad roads and that confounded postilion, my plan succeeds—we shall take them by sur-

prise; and bows and speeches at the carriage door dispensed with. But, Marie, you are silent —what! not a word?

MARIE (*who has been standing as one lost in thought, starts*).

I!—you were speaking, papa?

COUNT.

And now I think on't, for a good half hour you have not oped your lips—and all your sprightliness o' the sudden gone. What! beats the little heart! O it begins feel to uneasy, does it? poor thing—poor thing!

MARIE (*absently*).

Uneasy? why uneasy?

COUNT.

Methinks a first interview with an intended bridegroom——

MARIE.

Ah true! I had forgotten—I was not thinking of him.

COUNT.

No! is it possible? of what, then, were you thinking?

MARIE.

Of something very different—of a scene I witnessed in the farmhouse yonder: that it is, I think, which makes me serious.

COUNT.

O ho!—a scene?—I comprehend! Let me look at your purse.

MARIE (*holds it up playfully*).

'Tis empty.

COUNT.

I thought so—and the twenty ducats?

MARIE.

Gone!

COUNT (*smiling*).

So so! and what will you do without money in a strange house, where you will be expected to leave some more than ordinary token of your liberality?

MARIE.

O papa, there's plenty in your writing-case.

COUNT.

Ha, ha! you think to help yourself from that?

MARIE.

To be sure I do; and when I have told you how and why it was my ducats went——

COUNT.

Not now—not now—I'll hear your tale another time.

MARIE.

O! let me tell you only, that those few moments in the old farmhouse have been a lesson to me

shall last me all my life long. We, father, give to the poor, and largely and willingly we give from our abundance. Yet what is that to the beneficence of those who are themselves most poor, and yet spare out of their very need? That young man, for instance,—he who gave us such a pleasant reception—

COUNT.

The Baron's bailiff?

MARIE.

But is he so indeed? I heard one say, "your honour."

COUNT.

Some one, belike, who wanted money from him!

MARIE.

Do you know his name, papa?

COUNT.

I never asked.

[*Marie turns away, and sinks into a reverie.*

Enter EDWARD. (*Whenever under the eye of Marie, he affects a most dismal melancholy air.*)

EDWARD.

My honoured friend!—Ah, the Countess too—I heard but now of your arrival.

MARIE (*starting*).

Ah! Baron Rudolph—you here!

EDWARD (*with sentiment*).

You deign to know me then! you have not your poor Rudolph quite forgotten?

MARIE.

On the contrary, I'm charmed to find you here! 'tis so pleasant in a strange house to see the face of an old friend!

EDWARD.

Not always—not under all circumstances, I fear!——

COUNT (*aside*).

Now what the devil sent this puppy here? 'Morning, young gentleman!

EDWARD.

Dear Count, to find myself again between you and your charming daughter, recalls the happiest, brightest days of my sad life. (*Sighs.*) Do you remember, Countess, our delightful boatings on the Moldau—our excursions to Bubenz—and our long walks in the valley of Czarka?*

MARIE.

O perfectly—they stand noted in my pocket-book.

COUNT (*aside*).

I wish he were at the bottom of the sea!

* Places in the vicinity of Prague.

EDWARD.

And do you remember the day when we passed the churchyard outside the Oynster gate, and saw that poor youth laid in the ground, whom slighted love——

MARIE.

Yes—poor foolish youth! my heart was sorry for him.

EDWARD.

Foolish do you call him?

MARIE.

Why, is it not a folly when a man,
Born to high duties and high destinies,
Even as he is a *man*—becomes the sport
And victim of mere passion? (*pauses thoughtfully.*)
Men are in that far happier——

EDWARD.

In that—in what?

MARIE.

They can in some sort choose their own destiny.

EDWARD (*sighing ostentatiously*).

Not always, Countess.

MARIE.

Yes—not only choose their lot in life, but who shall share that lot.

EDWARD.

But if the possession of that one fair object—

that realisation of our youth's ideal, be denied to us!

MARIE.

Why then you have freedom left. Freedom of action, will,—and the whole world before you—the power still to save, to serve—to be and to make happy; but a poor woman has no resource—marriage is forced upon her, as a necessity, be it her will or not—
Too happy if the man, to whom her fate,
And not her own deliberate choice, has given her,
Be not quite worthless.

COUNT.

Why, Marie—why, girl, I never heard you speak in such fine sentences!

EDWARD.

The Countess seems indeed more serious than her wont.

MARIE (*sportively*).

Is it not a woman's privilege, and the moon's,
To change from hour to hour!

EDWARD.

Have you seen my kinsman?

MARIE (*with a checked feeling of disgust*).

No—not yet.

EDWARD.

He is not then returned from hunting ; we expected you later.

MARIE.

There is no hurry—none.

EDWARD.

His return can hardly be indifferent to you, Countess?

MARIE (*petulantly*).

In what does that concern you?

COUNT.

Nay, Marie, be not so ungracious—you snap the young man up after a fashion—

EDWARD.

If he but knew how her ill-humour charms
me! (*aside.*)
(*Aloud and distantly.*) I recognise the Countess
And that discretion, that severity
With which she knew full well to check my boldness
In former times, when I presumed too far.
And since in this I find her still unchanged,
May I not hope that *all* remains the same?

COUNT (*sarcastically*).

As far as I am concerned, my opinion of you remains the same—if that be any comfort. (*Aside.*) coxcomb!

EDWARD.

You are silent, Countess?

MARIE.

I am not fond of professions, as you well know; but none, believe me, can wish you better.

The BARON *is heard outside.*

BARON.

Here already! in the house! and I not know a word of it!

COUNT.

By my faith I should know that voice!

Enter the BARON.

COUNT (*running up to him with open arms*).

Wilhelm! do you not know me?

BARON.

Leistenfeld!

COUNT.

Come to my arms, old friend! (*They embrace.*) How long is it, Wilhelm, since we last saw each other?

BARON.

Some eighteen years, or more.

COUNT.

Ay, time flies! What do you say to us for coming upon you thus unawares? We left Thal-

berg before dawn this morning, just to take you by surprise.

BARON.

And therefore 'tis you find us unprepared—nothing as I could wish it.

COUNT.

But as I wished it, my good old friend! If there be anything I detest in the world, 'tis to be received in the house of my dearest friend by a bevy of liveried fellows drawn up in the hall; stiff bows instead of warm embraces—and who knows?—perhaps a speech in Latin, penned by the schoolmaster!

BARON.

Always the same gay buoyant spirit!

COUNT.

And you too, (*looking at him*)—nay, I can scarce return the compliment. Fie, Thürmer, what a wrinkled brow is here!—furrows of care and thought, but not of age;—no, no—you are my junior by three months at least.

BARON.

Ah, Leistenfeld! since we parted, how many things have happened——

COUNT.

What things, man? I heard of no misfortune—on the contrary, they tell me you have grown rich.

BARON.

Speak not of it—riches are oft a burthen.

COUNT.

Ha, ha! an easy burthen, methinks.

BARON (*seeing Marie, who comes forward*).

Is not this your charming daughter? pray present me.

COUNT.

My daughter—truly is she: if I had not quite forgotten her, though in the present case she is not last nor least to be considered! Marie, my friend the Baron von Thürmer.

BARON.

Fair Countess, a thousand welcomes heartily—(*Kisses her hand*)—might I but be permitted to hope that the humble roof you have deigned to grace with your lovely presence would never lose you more, I were most happy.

MARIE (*withdraws her hand and curtseys*).

Your lordship honours me! (*Aside.*) The compliment was somewhat overstrained. (*She walks away.*)

COUNT.

But where's your son?

BARON (*looking at Edward*).

My son!

EDWARD (*pulling his father by the sleeve*).

Yes, your son,—my cousin Edward. (*Softly.*) Hush! hush! you know—all goes on capitally.

BARON (*in a whisper, and angrily*).

Boy, I insist——

EDWARD.

Hush, hush! for heaven's sake! I am in the last act of my drama, close upon the catastrophe; will you spoil all?

COUNT (*approaching*).

What's the matter here?

EDWARD (*taking the Count aside*).

Do not ask, dear Count; my uncle's in a rage against his son for not being here in time.

COUNT.

Indeed, I'm sorry! (*To the Baron.*) Your son, it seems, is fond of hunting.

BARON (*perplexed*).

My son?

COUNT.

Tush, my good friend! young men will have their pastimes: had he known of our intent to be here early, he had not gone a hunting, I'll be sworn.

BARON.

My son, you say, is out hunting?

COUNT.

Why, know you not he is?

BARON.

No—O yes! surely. (*Aside.*) A pretty figure do I cut here!

Enter RUDOLPH (*hastily*).

RUDOLPH.

Father, they tell me your guests——

COUNT.

Father!

EDWARD (*aside*).

Ha! excellent! I have my cue! (*Aloud.*) Ay, there he stands—the long-expected!

BARON (*staring*).

Who?

EDWARD.

My cousin.

MARIE.

Is it possible!—this gentleman?

COUNT.

What! our host of the farm?

MARIE (*aside, drawing breath as if relieved*).

Yes—I'd marry *him!*

BARON (*aside*).

This is too absurd!

RUDOLPH.

Ha! whom do I see?

EDWARD.

The Count and Countess Leistenfeld.

BARON (*whispers Rudolph*).

Do you know them?

RUDOLPH.

Certainly—they were at the farm this morning.

EDWARD (*with an heroic air*).

Allow me, cousin! this—this is your envied place! (*Presenting Rudolph to the Countess; he approaches her timidly*).

EDWARD (*drawing his father aside*).

Do you not mark her emotion, her evident alarm?—delicious!

BARON (*aside*).

You're a fool!

RUDOLPH.

I am but too happy to see you again!—you too, my lord! (*bowing to the Count.*)

MARIE.

Really I did not expect to find in our polite host—the surprise——

RUDOLPH.

Is not, I hope, disagreeable?

MARIE.

Why should you think so?

COUNT.

Ha, you rogue! you knew full well who were your guests this morning!

RUDOLPH.

Nay, how should I have guessed it?

COUNT.

If not, so much the better, our acquaintance has begun without disguise or ceremony. Your hand, my boy!

RUDOLPH (*warmly*).

I hope—I hope you mean to stay among us?

COUNT.

Ah! you hope it, do you? so do I, faith! why you have grown up a fine tall youth since I saw you! Do you remember, Wilhelm? (*To the Baron, who has been conversing aside with Edward.*) You, I suppose, (*turning to Rudolph,*) have forgotten all about it?

RUDOLPH.

Was I not a child then?

COUNT.

Yes, truly, a mere brat; but, Wilhelm, 'tis the same look—O I'd know him anywhere! but come, my dear Baron, let us see your house.

BARON.

Your apartment, I fear, is not quite ready.

COUNT.

Then show me yours. I make it a point never to go into my room till after my Marie has been there, and has seen that everything is arranged according to my fancies—so take me with you. I'll see your gallery and your drawing-room, and

your dining-room—your stables—your kitchen—damme! I'll see all, from the garret to the cellar! This young gentleman (*taking hold of Edward*) shall go along with us; the other (*pointing to Rudolph*) shall keep my daughter company till we return.

BARON.

But, my dear Count, I think——

COUNT.

Think, man! nonsense! don' you see there are three too many in the room?—come, come!

EDWARD (*turning back, runs up hurriedly to Rudolph*).

My dear cousin, one word! the Countess thinks, and the Count too, that you—I mean that I—I confess——

COUNT (*seizing him by the arm*).

Pooh! pooh! young man, you must take some other time to talk to your cousin; for the present (*winking*) he's otherwise engaged—off with you—(*Pushing him out.*)

EDWARD.

Now, then, let fate decide it!

[*Exeunt, the Count urging them off.*

RUDOLPH—MARIE.

RUDOLPH (*looking after Edward with amazement*).

What could he possibly mean?

MARIE (*aside, observing him*).

O no, I'll not believe it—he has no share in the perfidy of his father! I would this moment tell him all—all—but I so fear to grieve him.

RUDOLPH.

You heard your father? he has left me here to keep you company—to me what a delightful task!—if only——I do not tire you—

MARIE.

No fear of that; your unpretending, sensible conversation I should prefer to all the common-place wit of our townbred coxcombs.

RUDOLPH.

Indeed? I cannot doubt you,—yet I fear me
You only say so out of your good nature.
Since you endure my presence—too happy am I—
Methinks 'tis strange, that being so shy, so bashful,
When I would speak to a lady, never knowing
How to begin—O I could talk with you
The whole day long!

MARIE.

Indeed? I'm glad of that.

RUDOLPH.

I do believe
There is no thought, no feeling of my heart,
I would not tell you—freely as to heaven.

MARIE (*smiling*).

What, then you think there is some goodness in me?

RUDOLPH (*passionately*).

You are all goodness—as you are all beauty!

MARIE (*shrinking back in confusion*).

Surely—a goddess of three hours' acquaintance!
—O you do not know me yet—

RUDOLPH.

Do I not?
'When I am walking in our woods, and chance
To pick up a stray leaf—a tiny leaf,
I have but to look upon its shape and hue,
And delicate vein'd texture—straight I name you
The parent tree, from which the breeze hath swept it——
Its form, its nature, and its uses:—thus
From the least action, springing from the heart,
I'll tell you what that heart is."

MARIE.

You are a nice observer.

RUDOLPH.

And when I heard you speak so kindly
To that poor Grimes—your sweet eyes filled
With gathering tears——

MARIE.

No more—O shame me not!

To give a little from our superfluity
What is it but to prove—we are not monsters?
But you—who would have sacrificed——

[*She stops suddenly; a pause.*

You seem, for one bearing your rank and name,
But poorly provided with the means
Either to give or spend?

RUDOLPH.

I am content.

MARIE.

Yet you love giving?

RUDOLPH.

Why, I cannot hoard.

MARIE.

And yet—I'd wager that you run not into debt?

RUDOLPH.

No, never—when I do give,
'Tis what I honestly can call my own.

MARIE.

How is it you reside not here in the castle?

RUDOLPH.

I have my apartment here, but, to confess the truth, I find my lodging at the farm yonder much more convenient for my pursuits.

MARIE.

You are fond of farming?

RUDOLPH.

I understand but little else.

MARIE.

What, have you not studied—been to college?

RUDOLPH.

No—I should have made a sorry student, or a man of business; I could not bear to be confined within brick walls and crowded streets—I must live with nature, and must breathe the free air of her heaven.

MARIE.

You are right! it seems to me, too, that being
pent
In narrow streets and houses crushes the heart—
Nay, parches it, as with
A kind of thirst for nature and for freedom.
There is a power in the broad bright glance
Of sky and landscape mingling, which enlarges
As well as cheers and purifies the mind.

RUDOLPH.

You love the country, then?

MARIE.

Love it? O yes, indeed! I should prefer a country life to any other.

RUDOLPH.

You would? for that sweet speech I needs must kiss your hand—may I?

(*Taking her hand timidly as she presents it; he kisses it, then holds it for a moment, gazing on it.*)

MARIE.

What are you thinking of?

RUDOLPH.

Forgive me—I was looking at your hand.

MARIE.

No harm in that.

RUDOLPH.

And I was thinking, pray pardon me——

MARIE.

What were you thinking?

RUDOLPH.

How happy the possession of that hand
Might make a man!

MARIE.

Perhaps it might—
If a true heart, and some small skill in housewifery
Would satisfy him—*

RUDOLPH.

He were a blockhead else! (*Pauses.*) Lady, may I ask your name?

* In Germany, no rank, however high—unless perhaps the very *highest* of all—exempts a woman from "some small skill in housewifery." A lady whom I knew, in rank and blood superior even to Marie, and one of the most accomplished and truly elegant women I ever met with, told me she had studied for two years (from fourteen to sixteen) the various arts of housekeeping; making pastry and preparing all things necessary for the sick, &c. I wish it were more generally the fashion in England.

MARIE.

Marie.

RUDOLPH.

Marie! 'tis a sweet name, a consecrated—
There's faith, and hope, and love, and blessedness,
In those two little syllables, *Marie!*
I had a sister once who bore that name—
But I was going to say——No, no,—I cannot!

MARIE.

What were you going to say?

RUDOLPH.

What I would say—was—The Count, your father—he is a great man, is he not?

MARIE.

He is no more than any other nobleman.

RUDOLPH.

But is he not very rich?

MARIE (*smiling*).

Is it a crime to be rich?

RUDOLPH.

O no—on the contrary, I am glad of it, for his sake—but yet—(*Aside.*) O this will never do, I am a fool—(*Pauses*). May I ask how old you are?

MARIE (*smiling*).

That, sir, is a question which no gentleman must ask a lady, be she old or young.

RUDOLPH.

Ah, true, true—I had forgot. I beg your pardon!

MARIE.

'Tis granted.

RUDOLPH.

In truth, I asked
Not caring much to know how old you are,
But if you had answered, seventeen or eighteen,
I might, again, have ventured the remark—
[*Pauses, embarrassed.*
That it was time to think—to——
Did you not tell me, lady, you had a suitor?

MARIE.

Yes.

RUDOLPH.

May I ask if it be my cousin?

MARIE.

Your cousin? no indeed.

RUDOLPH.

No? he told me of a fair acquaintance he had made in Prague, and then I thought, perhaps—

MARIE.

'Tis true, I knew your cousin when he was there: but for any thought of marriage—you may believe me, there's nothing in't.

RUDOLPH.

Thank heaven for that! (*Aside.*) And yet
What can it be to me? What hope have I?

MARIE.

What were you saying?

RUDOLPH,

This suitor, of whom you spoke,—
He would not dare aspire to your hand,
Unless he were an all-accomplished gentleman,
And worthy of you?

MARIE (*aside*).

What would he say?

RUDOLPH.

You told me once, with such a sweet, sweet voice,
You did not care for those gay cavaliers;
Did you not say so?

MARIE.

I did;—what then?

RUDOLPH (*half aside*).

O if I dared to speak—but no—O no!
It were too much presumption.

Enter the COUNT *hastily.*

COUNT.

Marie—forgive the intrusion; but here's the carriage come, and half-a-dozen men pulling the things about; I'm sorry, but, you know, unless you see to my affairs yourself, nothing is ever right, or as I wish it—pr'ythee go.

MARIE.

This moment, dear papa. (*Aside to the Count.*) And truly the gentleman there was beginning to be *quite* incomprehensible.

COUNT (*as she is going detains her and whispers*).
Marie! tell me—how do you like him?

MARIE (*in a low voice*).
Papa—I'll have him! [*Exit.*

THE COUNT—RUDOLPH.

COUNT.

So now, young gentleman, let me hear what *you* have to say, and speak to the point at once!

RUDOLPH.

I, my lord? most willingly—what is your pleasure?

COUNT.

Come, come—how do you like my daughter?

RUDOLPH.

Your daughter?

COUNT.

Yes, to be sure—she pleases you, eh? I thought so.

RUDOLPH.

My Lord Count—I ——

COUNT.

Come, answer plainly as a man of metal—you like her?

RUDOLPH.

You have then discovered?—O I am indeed a poor dissembler—yet be not angry!

COUNT.

Angry?

RUDOLPH.

On mine honour as a man,
I could not help it; and the heart, you know,
Will not be ruled.

COUNT (*gravely*).

Do you mean to tell me that your heart is engaged elsewhere?

RUDOLPH.

Elsewhere?—O no! and the more wretched I—I would it were!

COUNT.

Or perhaps my daughter does not fulfil the expectations you had formed of your future wife?

RUDOLPH.

Count! do you mock me?
Pardon me, but it is not well, my lord!
What have I done, that you should scorn me thus?
I am a man of honour, and in blood your daughter's equal.

COUNT.

Young sir! have you lost your senses? or have I? Speak, does my daughter please you?

RUDOLPH.

O heaven and earth!

COUNT.

Nay, with interjections we shall ne'er get on. Does she please you, or does she not?

RUDOLPH.

Well, since you needs must have it—I love her to distraction!

COUNT.

And pray why did you not say so at once?

RUDOLPH.

To what end should I say so?

COUNT.

To what end? Is't not your wish to marry her?

RUDOLPH.

To marry her?—your daughter? Count! Should I dare make such a mad proposal, what would you think of me?

COUNT.

As of an honest fellow, whom I esteem and love, and thereupon give you my blessing.

RUDOLPH.

Count, take care, and say it not again, lest I do take you at your word!

COUNT.

Why, do so—I desire nothing better.

RUDOLPH.

Surely, surely, you cannot be in earnest?

COUNT.

By heaven I am! and in most serious earnest;
Nor can I understand what you do find
Surprising or incredible in the assurance.

RUDOLPH.

My *father*, then?

COUNT.

And *son*, with all my heart!

RUDOLPH.

Away, then, with all respects—I can hold no longer! O I must hug you!

[*Seizes him in his arms, and embraces him closely.*

COUNT.

O mercy! mercy! squeeze me not to death!

RUDOLPH.

O pardon me!—the joy—the exceeding joy—
Is it indeed no dream?

COUNT.

Compose yourself.

RUDOLPH.

Had Heaven in store such blessedness for me—
Me, a plain country fellow? Ah, I do fear me
Your noble friends will scarce approve your choice.
Will they not look down on my rustic breeding?

COUNT.

He is no more my friend,
Who could look down on such a heart as yours!

RUDOLPH.

And then my slender income——

COUNT (*laughing*).

Ay, I can well believe
Old dad has kept you somewhat tight; but what then?
In honour of our wedding he'll come down,
And handsomely—he must and shall.

RUDOLPH.

O no, no! he must not—shall not! I will not hear of it; he has already done so much for me.

COUNT.

Well, well, we'll not dispute about it; my daughter is rich enough to afford to marry even a poor man; and I'd give her to you, were you as poor as Job. Let that content you, my dear scrupulous friend. So, in one word, I am to understand that, formally, and at once, you ask my daughter's hand?

RUDOLPH.

Once, twice, a thousand times over, as my best good! as I would ask of Heaven its chiefest blessing! (*Pause.*) And yet, you spoke of fortune. Now I remember me, your daughter's

rich—an heiress, as I have heard ; you do not think ?——

COUNT (*laughing*).

No, no, not I !

RUDOLPH.

When first I loved your daughter, I knew not she was rich.

COUNT.

Content you, my dear fellow !
Such an outburst of honest joy did never
From selfish interest spring ; so now farewell !
I go to speak to my daughter, and to hear
What she will say.

RUDOLPH.

What think you will she say ?

COUNT.

She will say—yes !

RUDOLPH.

I think so too—my heart does whisper it.
Go, then, my *father!* and O soon
Let me hear from you !

COUNT.

Adieu, despairing shepherd !

[*As Rudolph is about to embrace him, he draws back.*

No, thank you ! no more hugging ! [*Exit.*

RUDOLPH (*alone*).

O day of joy and wonder! who will assure me
That I shall not wake up from this blest vision
To find it *air!*—but no,—'tis true—'tis real—
I do not dream. Poor Rudolph Thürmer
Has won a bride. O heaven,—and what a bride!
The loveliest, sweetest, best in all the world!
(*Pauses.*) I saw it in her eyes, and in her smile,
And in the gradual dawn of that sweet blush,
That came and went—O she will not say *no!*
(*Pauses.*) I'll have the banns asked in our village church
'Mong those who have loved me well;
Then on the third Sunday, when I hear together
The names of Rudolph Thürmer—Marie Leistenfeld—
O then—if the mounting joy, that even now
Swells my heart full to bursting——

[*Presses his hands to his heart.*

EDWARD (*at the door*).

Are you quite alone?

RUDOLPH (*springing towards him*).

Alone! no, coz! but compassed round with spirits of joy. O Edward, you are come in happy

time—I wanted some one with whom to share the rapture!

EDWARD.

Rapture!

RUDOLPH.

Edward, would you think it? I am a chosen bridegroom.

EDWARD.

A bridegroom?

RUDOLPH.

Ay, be amazed as I am—but 'tis true.
Count Leistenfeld grants me his daughter's
hand.

EDWARD.

Heaven and earth!

RUDOLPH.

Ay, is it not strange—incredible? To say the truth, I never should have had courage to ask it, but the old gentleman—good excellent man!—met me more than half way.

EDWARD.

O my cursed folly! Rudolph, will you ever forgive me? 'tis all my doing!

RUDOLPH.

Yours? you've done a good action then—Heaven bless you for it! O I am the happiest man in the world!

EDWARD.

Not so—not so—poor fellow! how shall I tell it you? But, Rudolph, you have rejoiced too soon.

RUDOLPH.

How so, coz?

EDWARD.

'Tis all a mistake!

RUDOLPH.

Make me not such a wretch!

EDWARD.

Call it caprice—folly—vanity—what you will—I have the Count and Countess both deceived. Both take you for my father's son—me for his nephew. Rudolph! O had they not arrived before th' appointed time, I had told you all!

RUDOLPH.

And how, in heaven's name, came that wild thought in your head?

EDWARD.

I wished to try the tenderness of Marie: by heaven, I had no other purpose!—had I fore-seen——

RUDOLPH (*turning away*).

I thought so! 'twas too much—all—all is vanished!

EDWARD.

Rudolph—dear cousin—grieve not thus——

RUDOLPH.

Ay, that is easily said! Marie your bride? Go—you have acted basely—cruelly!

EDWARD.

Not knowingly, believe it!

RUDOLPH.

What signifies it? in the consequence 'tis still the same.

EDWARD.

True—O I could beat myself!

RUDOLPH.

You have cause: in what a position have you placed me?—a position at once false and ridiculous.

EDWARD.

It shall be explained instantly, and then, you know, the blame will rest on me.

RUDOLPH.

The blame! ay, cousin—the blame on you, on *me* the pain—the ridicule; but you are a rich man, cousin, and a happy. Did it never occur to you that one like me might buy the joy, the hope of the last half hour, with the misery of a whole life?

EDWARD.

Nonsense, cousin; never take things in this

serious sentimental fashion; 'tis but a joke, man, and for the rest, I know what my father's intentions are. Rudolph, you will be a rich man, sooner than you think for't; and then, you know, you can choose a wife for yourself.

RUDOLPH (*with disgust*).

What talk you of a wife? If I cannot have Marie, I will die a bachelor for her sake.

EDWARD.

Die! pooh! for a woman who does not love you?

RUDOLPH.

How do you know that?

EDWARD.

Because she loves *me*.

RUDOLPH.

You! she'll marry you, perhaps, because she must; but love!—pshaw!

EDWARD.

Why, cousin Rudolph, I knew her in Prague, I tell you!

RUDOLPH.

So she told me.

EDWARD.

And danced with her.

RUDOLPH.

Well—what then?

EDWARD.

Rudolph, you make me angry.

RUDOLPH.

'Twas not my intention.

EDWARD.

I will this day explain all!

RUDOLPH.

Do so, I pray you.

EDWARD.

And then you'll see, cousin——

RUDOLPH.

Ay, and *you'll* see, cousin; we all shall see. When do you intend to speak to the Count?

EDWARD.

'Tis now dinner-time; the moment we rise from table.

RUDOLPH.

And must I appear once more under your name? Edward, I warn you—it may be dangerous.

EDWARD.

Thanks for your warning—I'll risk the danger.

RUDOLPH.

Her father has even now made my proposal known to her.

EDWARD.

Well—I should like to see how she receives it.

RUDOLPH.

And I tell you fairly, that though you oblige me in honour to appear once more under your name, I will *not* play false to mine own heart for your advantage. I can assume no coldness where I feel none.

EDWARD.

Do as you list.

RUDOLPH.

—On the contrary, there is danger that I do my best to please; I feel I could not help it.

EDWARD.

You have my leave.

RUDOLPH.

To win her heart?

EDWARD (*ironically*).

To be sure, coz!

RUDOLPH.

You give me, then, *carte blanche*?

EDWARD.

Yes, yes.

RUDOLPH.

And if she give you the willow to wear?

EDWARD.

Why, then I'll be your bridesman.

RUDOLPH.

Your hand on't!—that's all I wished to know, and now my conscience is at case.

(Exit, Edward follows him laughing.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The apartment of the Countess.*

Enter the BARON, *followed by* EDWARD.

EDWARD.

You here, father, in the Countess's room?

BARON.

I am here to speak to the Countess, to retrieve your folly, discover all—and beg of her, indulgence!

EDWARD.

And I am here for the same purpose—pray leave it to me.

BARON.

I have left too much to you. When I think upon the scene this morning, when I was led,

through shame and fear together, to countenance that foolish farce of yours, I am well-nigh mad. At dinner just now, I could not touch a morsel.

EDWARD.

This evening shall make amends for all: we'll all be happy—all but that poor fellow, Rudolph. On mine honour I could be sorry for him—though he has angered me, and wounded my self-love past all endurance.

BARON.

The youngster has had the audacity to make proposals to the Countess!

EDWARD.

Which the Countess has declined.

BARON.

Declined, do you say? she has asked time to consider—the young lady's phrase on these occasions.

EDWARD.

Did you observe her, as she sat at table, with such a shade of sadness and disquiet upon her lovely brow?

BARON.

Absent, indeed, she seemed, and thoughtful—but nothing more.

EDWARD.

Did you not mark how oft her eye rested on

me, with such a look, so tenderly significant? and then it wandered to my cousin, with a glance, which said as plainly, "You my husband?—no indeed!"

BARON.

It said all that?—you have a knack at interpreting looks with a vengeance!

EDWARD.

As we left the table, she spoke to him. I could only hear the words, "In an hour:" then he bowed low, and answered, "In an hour." You will see she has made the appointment, just to give him his dismission; and yet—no—it must not come to that—such a humiliation my poor cousin must not endure for me!

BARON.

Poor cousin—and always *poor!* I pray you waste not your compassion till you see cause:—as for this *humiliation* you speak of, it is as likely to be yours as his, unless you bring this foolish farce to an end, and quickly. Girls take strange fancies in their heads sometimes.

EDWARD.

Ay—but for a girl of her rank and education to take a fancy to our country cousin, were something quite too strange, upon mine honour. She has eyes—some sense too—and can make comparisons—and though I say it——

BARON.

No doubt—but in a young girl's head, sometimes, love plays the devil both with sense and eyes. Therefore I will not trust her—she shall know all, and instantly. (*Going to the door of the inner room.*)

EDWARD.

She shall—in a few moments, if you will only leave the field to me!

BARON.

I fear to trust you.

EDWARD.

Nay, you'll allow, to unravel the tangled plot of our romance is rather more suitable to a young gallant than an old sage papa. She comes! leave me alone with her, I beg.

BARON.

Well, then, I leave you. Succeed, if you can, with the young lady: meanwhile I'll go to her father, tell him the truth, and bring him round, if possible. [*Exit.*

EDWARD.

I swear papa had well-nigh made me feel a little odd—but—ahem! *Courage, mon ami!* were I to suffer my country cousin to bear off the prize, I never more could show my face among my friends in town. She comes, quite in the *penserosa*

style. Now for a love-lorn look—a sigh—and so forth. (*He walks aside.*)

Enter MARIE *from the inner room, slowly, as if lost in thought.*

MARIE.

In an hour I told him to be here—why did
I not say on the instant?—
Alas! I felt the weakness of my heart,
And wished for time to gather up my strength.
And now each moment
I feel I grow more anxious and more fearful.
(*Pauses.*)
Howe'er it end, this interview before me
Must needs be fraught with pain.
If Edward be the man I think to find him,
How will his father's perfidy wound his heart?
If he be not—O no—I do not doubt him—
I only fear—O coward that I am—
The pain I must inflict. (*Pauses.*)
I will speak truth, though I do die for it!
Truth will I have, though it destroy me utterly!
But this suspense—'tis dreadful—

EDWARD (*who has been approaching during the last words*).

(*Aside.*) She will speak the truth, will she? bravo!—now is my cue. (*Aloud.*) Countess!

MARIE (*aside*).

He here? provoking! (*Aloud.*) Your pleasure, Baron Rudolph?

EDWARD.

I ventured hither to offer my congratulations on your approaching marriage.

MARIE.

Pray spare them, till I know a cause why you should offer them, or I accept them!

EDWARD.

Nay, lady, it is already known through all the house that my thrice happy kinsman——

MARIE.

Excuse me—your kinsman is my suitor, it is true; but for a marriage, there must be two wills consenting.

EDWARD (*joyfully*).

It is not yet decided?

MARIE (*sighing*).

Not yet.

EDWARD.

That was sadly spoken, Countess!

MARIE (*playfully*).

I do believe you have infected me with your trick of sighing.

EDWARD.

It is in vain you would dissemble!
In those fair eyes the gathering tears rebuke

The light laugh on your lips.——
Countess, you are not happy!

MARIE.

And you, sir, not a whit discreet!

EDWARD.

O pardon me!
If, in an hour like this, I cast aside
All idle ceremony—all vain forms——

MARIE.

I pray you do not; for even ceremony
Has its good uses, and forms their seasons.

EDWARD.

Countess! will you not at least allow you do not love my kinsman?

MARIE.

(*Aside.*) This is too much! (*Aloud.*) In what, sir, does it concern you?

EDWARD.

Can you ask it? Do you not know
That I have loved you, Marie, even from the moment
When I first met you? Do not turn away!
Let me, O let me read my bliss in those
Enchanting eyes! (*Kneels.*)

MARIE.

Pray, sir—forbear—at such a time—it is not fitting, sir.

EDWARD.

Why not? I have been silent, and did not use my privilege of old acquaintanceship against my cousin; but O! now—it surely is permitted me to speak.

MARIE (*politely*).

Permitted! certainly; yet I could wish you had not availed yourself of the permission. (*Aside.*) Such folly—when I have far other things in my mind!

EDWARD.

Are you so changed, that now you scorn the love
Of a poor orphan youth?

MARIE.

That I do not *scorn* such love,
I may this very day give you the proof.

EDWARD.

Marie, do I understand you?

MARIE (*half aside*).

I fancy not.

EDWARD.

You will allow that once that gentle heart inclined towards me?

MARIE.

My heart?—excuse me, I allow no such thing.

EDWARD.

You are resolved, then, to obey your father's wish?

MARIE.

Of course my father's wish is mine. (*Aside.*) Insufferable!

EDWARD.

And yet, what had you done, if, when at Prague, I had appeared before you with all my kinsman's rights, his name, his fortune? Marie, how would you feel?

MARIE.

Pray spare me. Let it be enough, I do not feel, or think, as I did then.

EDWARD.

No?

MARIE.

No; the plain truth is best; and, sir, were you now king of the universe, I could not—pardon me—accept your hand!

EDWARD.

And who has robbed me of your good opinion?

MARIE.

No one—only I have a better opinion of another.

EDWARD.

Marie!—good heavens! is it come to this?

MARIE.

Pardon me;
It is not my fault that I give you pain; you have

driven me to it; and, after all, 'tis best and honestest to speak the truth.

EDWARD.

And that other of whom you speak, can it be my cousin?

MARIE.

It is even he, if you will know the truth.

EDWARD.

I shall go mad—distracted!

MARIE.

Pray don't!

EDWARD.

Rivalled! and by a country bumpkin!
O blockhead that I was!

[*A knocking at the door.*

Enter BEATRICE.

BEATRICE.

Sir, Count Leistenfeld is calling for your honour, he begs you will come to him immediately —this instant.

EDWARD.

I come—I come! Has anything happened, Beatrice?

BEATRICE.

Not that I know of; he and my lord were locked up together in the library for a good half hour, and then he came out with such a frown on his face!—that's all I know.

EDWARD (*aside*).

So—I understand; the storm has burst; but now I'm armed against it. (*Aloud.*) Madam, I have the honour——

[*He bows, she curtseys very low. He goes out.*

MARIE (*aside, looking after him*).

And this is the man that but a few hours since
I fancied I might love?—yet what will not
A young girl fancy, ere she has felt the touch
Of real earnest passion! O me! O me!

BEATRICE (*aside*).

Well, I declare she doesn't look so very happy. (*Aloud.*) If I might be so bold—I beg your ladyship's pardon—but I am an old servant of the family——

MARIE.

Pray speak freely, for though not of the family——

BEATRICE.

Ah, but they say you will be—is it not true?—you are to be the bride of our young lord?

MARIE.

And if it were so, would you be sorry for it?

BEATRICE.

For the matter of that——

MARIE (*smiling*).

This hesitation is not so flattering to *me*, methinks.

BEATRICE.

O I don't mean that; if I don't look so glad as perhaps I ought to do, 'tis not because I wished another bride. O no! They say you're good—I'm sure you're beautiful. Only, if it had so pleased Heaven, I could have wished a different bridegroom.

MARIE.

A different bridegroom!

BEATRICE.

I beseech your ladyship's pardon, but I would. Young Baron Rudolph—O if your choice had fallen on him!

MARIE.

On him—Rudolph?

BEATRICE.

Why, is he not a pretty young gentleman?

MARIE.

Nay, there's no denying it.

BEATRICE.

And then he has a heart——! O if you knew him!—if you had but taken the trouble to try to know him!

MARIE (*aside*).

This is strange.

BEATRICE.

And then, if he be not so rich as his fine cousin, yet he is not a match to scorn, neither. Baron

Edward's valet has just told me that the old lord has settled all this estate here on him after his death.

MARIE.

Indeed? that's something! (*Aside.*) So then the old man is not quite steeled against his conscience!

BEATRICE.

Though, to be sure, it isn't the half of what Baron Rudolph by right inherited.

MARIE.

Ha! what do you say? What did Rudolph inherit?

BEATRICE.

Nothing — nothing! the word slipped out against my will.

MARIE.

As far as I know, your lord the Baron here
Owns not one foot of land that was not duly
Adjudged to him by law.

BEATRICE.

True—very true, my lady; and your ladyship may be assured that neither what I nor what some others venture to think of the matter, can alter that decree; but what I think I think— and thoughts are free.

Enter RUDOLPH.

RUDOLPH (*at the door*).

May I come in?

MARIE (*aside*).

'Tis he! O my heart! (*Aloud.*) Good Beatrice, By your leave, with this gentleman I have to speak alone.

BEATRICE.

With *him*, lady?

MARIE.

With *him*: is it not natural?

BEATRICE.

Not so very *natural*. Well, I take my leave.

[*She goes: Rudolph conducts her to the door.*

MARIE.

I lose all courage! O what a terrible task
Is this I have undertaken! (*Aside.*)

RUDOLPH.

If I only knew whether Edward has told her all! Until I am again *myself*, I have no heart to speak. (*Long pause.*)

MARIE.

You have done me the honour, sir, to ask my hand,
And I am yet a debtor for the answer
Due to your courtesy.

RUDOLPH.

Permit me, before you speak another word—was my cousin here?

MARIE.

Rudolph ?—yes, he was here.

RUDOLPH.

Rudolph ?

MARIE.

Is not that his name ? He was here even now, speaking of this and that—trifles, in short.

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

She knows nothing ! (*Aloud.*) Trifles, did you say ?

MARIE.

Indeed, I scarcely knew what he was saying, —my mind was busied with far other things.

[*Pauses ; and then speaks with exceeding softness.*

Edward !
It is my father's wish that I accept you,
And my own heart—without a blush I speak it,
Is not to his wish opposed ;
And yet there's a condition, and a hard one,
I must impose on you, which unfulfilled,
I never can be yours.

RUDOLPH.

O what condition could make hard the hope—
Only the hope—that I might dare aspire
To such a height of happiness!

MARIE.

Ere I can tell it, I must a tale divulge,
Painful for me to speak—for you to hear.

Edward!—ah, do not hate me!—O believe it,
A harder sacrifice I could not make
To duty, than to grieve you, Edward—
As I must now!

RUDOLPH.

You alarm me! What can it be to move you thus?

MARIE.

The far greater part of your father's property was inherited, I believe, from your aunt Sumner, was it not?

RUDOLPH.

My father's? (*Aside.*) Ah, I forget! (*Aloud.*) Yes, I believe so.

MARIE.

This estate here, the Walbach property, and a large sum in money?

RUDOLPH.

So I have heard.

MARIE.

Well, then, I have to tell you that the whole belongs, of right, to your young kinsman Rudolph; for to his father it was left by will.

RUDOLPH (*carelessly*).

O yes—in the first instance; but there was a second will, you know.

MARIE.

I know—your father—he—O Edward, that I

must grieve your heart thus! but your father did most basely force that second will from her when she was senseless, doting, and legally irresponsible for her act.

RUDOLPH.

For Heaven's sake, Countess, you did not—would not listen to such falsehoods! O I know—this is old Beatrice's tale, with which she daily plagues me; but I never listen to her.

MARIE (*gravely*).

You do wrong then!

RUDOLPH.

All envy, slander, idle gossip!—he would not do it—could not—*did* not do it.

MARIE.

Hear me with patience;—I possess the proof of
what I now disclose.
And I declare to you—with pain declare,
I *must* refuse your hand, unless you promise
To see your cousin Rudolph reinstated
In his just rights—such is my bond.

RUDOLPH.

My—my cousin Rudolph? (*Aside.*) Always I forget! (*Aloud*) Proofs did you say?

MARIE.

Dr. Brenner—one of the witnesses produced by your father to swear to the legality of the will—this Dr. Brenner died last spring, at

Prague: he was our physician, a friend of my father; and he knew I was the intended bride of the son of the Baron von Thürmer. The day before his death he sent for me, then tortured—wretched man!—with vain remorse of conscience; and, not daring to disclose himself to any other, he placed in my hands, in presence of the priest and his physician, the written acknowledgment of his guilt—and that of—of your father, Edward! He made me promise that I would use it for the benefit of the true heir, and see him righted—here it is. (*Takes a paper from her bosom*). The last confession of a sinful man, repenting of his sin!—Read it.

RUDOLPH (*reading*).

No—no—I never could have believed it—never!

MARIE.

O how I grieve for him!

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

And she might thus be mine—and almost a miracle—at least an angel, places this document in my hands—O heaven!

MARIE.

Edward, you tremble!

RUDOLPH.

I am stunned—I cannot think!

MARIE.

Dear friend, collect yourself. Your father will

resign the fortune thus unrighteously awarded: and all will yet be well.

RUDOLPH (*with anguish*).

Well?—O never more will it be well!

MARIE.

O yes, it will, it shall! my dowry's large—it will restore the loss.

RUDOLPH (*aside*).

And who will restore to me my faith in mine own kindred?

MARIE.

And then your cousin—he has a good heart: he will spare the honour of your father.

RUDOLPH.

Honour spared, lady! is honour then no more. (*Aside.*) And he could wrong me thus—me, who have so loved—so honoured him!

MARIE (*wringing her hands*).

O Edward—Edward!

RUDOLPH (*aside—looking at the paper*).

If this should once be known, he is undone—for ever infamous—and my cousin—O my poor cousin!

MARIE.

Alas—alas! I can conceive the anguish!

RUDOLPH.

You, lady? ah no — you do not, and you cannot!

MARIE.

Does then excess of sorrow make you unjust?

RUDOLPH.

Unjust? O no!—And yet I am most miserable! [*Throws himself into a chair.*

MARIE.

Miserable!!

RUDOLPH.

Did I say miserable? (*Starting up.*) No, heaven forbid! Out on me for a fool—to let a scrap of paper move me thus!—This same Dr. Brenner, he left no other writing to this purport?

MARIE.

No—none: and in your hands you hold your kinsman's patrimony, and his rights.

RUDOLPH (*crushing the paper in his hand*).

Do I so? 'tis a vile paper—penned by a sick man in a feverish dream—a dotard and a driveller! There's not a word of truth in't—and 'tis fit only to light the fire! [*Throws it in.*

MARIE.

Ah heaven! what have you done?

RUDOLPH (*laughing wildly*).

Done! I have battled with the evil one—and conquered! [*Rushes out.*

MARIE—*alone.*

No—I shall never recover it—never! (*A pause.*)

O can it be?—Edward! on whose truth and honour I would have built as on mine own, so to betray me? trifle with a kinsman's rights, a dying sinner's hope? O horrible!
I would have truth, and in what form it meets me! [*Pause*.
Say that filial love, and sense of honour,
Had more share in the deed than avarice?
What—do I seek to palliate it? O shame!—
This—this is worse than all.
——Ay, *there* it lies—in ashes,
The orphan's patrimony—gone for ever——
And with it all my faith in human kind—
My young heart's dream of happiness—my best of earthly hopes! [*She weeps*.

The COUNT *and the* BARON—*speaking as they enter*.

COUNT.

Ay, there she sits—go talk to her, and hear what she will say.

MARIE (*drying up her tears*).

Ah, papa—is it you? and you, Baron! (*coldly*.) May I ask to what I owe the honour of this visit?

BARON.

My dear young lady, we old folks, as it seems,

are of little use in the world but to repair and pardon the follies of the young; so be not angry if I come to beg your mercy for a delinquent.

MARIE.

Of whom do you speak?

BARON.

Of my offending but enamoured son.

MARIE.

If it be so, I must beg that you trouble yourself no farther; between your son and me, all, all is over, and my best hope is, never to see him more.

COUNT.

There! you hear her!

BARON.

All over, do you say?

MARIE.

I will confess, he had won my good opinion;—let me be true—I felt I could have loved him: but one little moment showed me, in time, my error—and now he is rather the object of my hate than love!

BARON.

And is it possible that a youthful folly——

MARIE.

Folly—do you call both cruelty and fraud?
Yet I forget—
O it becomes you well, sir, to excuse
Th' abettor of your crime.

COUNT.

Marie, you speak in riddles.

MARIE.

Which his lordship well understands.

BARON.

I swear I understand no more than he does what you would say.

MARIE.

Yet named your son? what—is it possible he has not boasted of his master-stroke? Have you not seen him? he left me even now—the traitor!

BARON.

My son!

COUNT.

Stay, stay—I see it all; Marie, of which son do you speak?

MARIE.

Which son! has he more than one then? I speak of Edward—he who this morning was presented to me—

COUNT.

Ah! now I comprehend. And pray, my sweet one, what has *this* Edward done, and how offended?

MARIE.

Father—dear father, you shall now know all—all that, in sympathy with your feeling for a

friend, I have hitherto concealed. This man—do you mark?—already he quails before the coming truth—this man, I say, has robbed the dead, and most unrighteously possessed himself of the inheritance of his nephew.

COUNT.

Marie!—what is all this?

BARON (*pale and agitated*).

Countess—you astonish me; such an accusation—without proof—

MARIE.

The incontestable proof of what I say, I held in my hand—the written confession of Dr. Brenner.

BARON.

Great heaven!—the confession—where is it?

MARIE.

I gave it to your son.

BARON.

My son! which son?

MARIE.

The only one I know as such—even now he left me.

BARON.

Ruined! dishonoured! (*he faints.*)

[*The Count runs to support him.*

COUNT.

Wilhelm!—Marie, sustain him—here, water, water—help! does no one hear?

Enter RUDOLPH *hastily.*

RUDOLPH.

What's the matter—is it the Countess? O my poor father!

BARON (*recovering, sees Rudolph at his feet*).

You here! (*to Marie.*) Tell me—and truly —was it to him you gave the writing?

MARIE.

Alas! I did so—cheated by that fair show
Of rectitude; would I had not! for he—
You will approve your son and heir, my lord!
He—HE there had the audacity to burn it
Before my eyes!

BARON (*starting up*).

Burn it?

MARIE.

Yes—
If ever since your crime you have slept in peace,
You may do so still, and fear no public shame—
No accusation more!—
Unless Heaven work a miracle, or the grave
Give up its dead,
There is no earthly power can reach you now.

BARON (*throwing himself into Rudolph's arms.*)

O Rudolph!—my preserver!

MARIE.

Rudolph?

COUNT.

His nephew!

MARIE.

His nephew—not his son?

COUNT.

His nephew—why you have been till now in error, you shall know in time.

MARIE.

His nephew!—the same——

BARON.

Ay—the same in whose behalf that writing existed. O Rudolph—can I ever repay you?

MARIE (*folding her hands on her bosom, looks up to heaven*).

Then my heart was not deceived in him!

RUDOLPH.

My dear father, why all this stir about it? I only wish you had never heard of this same cursed paper. Am I not your son? have I not you to thank for any good that's in me? and if once in your life, and long ago, temptation o'ercame you, shall I now suffer that men shall cast it in your teeth?—O never!

MARIE (*aside*).

O true to honour, as is the sun to the dial!

Enter EDWARD.

EDWARD (*at the door*).

May I come in?

BARON.

Ah, my son!

COUNT.

What shall we do with him?

MARIE.

Will you allow me, father? and you, my lord, to be the speaker in this case? [*The Baron bows.*

COUNT.

Ay, do, Marie, as you think best: let her speak, Wilhelm. Woman like, she has wit and words at will.

EDWARD (*advancing*).

As no one deigns ask after me, I must announce myself.

MARIE.

Sir, since we met,
Strange and important things have fallen out;
Your father (I know now whose son you are)
Had like to have been entangled in a lawsuit,
Involving not his fortune only, but his honour,
Good name, and even his life.

EDWARD.

How?

MARIE.

Believe what I do say—he will confirm it,
But ask no more; to all the circumstances
You must remain a stranger—*must*, observe——
Only to spare you all uneasiness
Know this—
That through the zeal and love of your good kinsman,
The ruin of your house, and of your house's honour,
Is averted.

EDWARD.

Rudolph! nobly done—just like him!

MARIE.

More than a brother has he been to you—
Your father owns in him the claims of a son,
And gives him in his lifetime this estate,
Which in his will he had left him—are you content?

EDWARD.

I am most glad on't!

MARIE.

For myself,
Methinks you have no cause to be offended
If here I give my hand to him whose hand
(Even by your own contrivance and consent)
Was placed in mine, as my affianced husband,
To whom, as such, I yielded up my heart,

Whom I have since proved worthy—O how
worthy!
My highest reverence, my deepest love—
And he has both!

[*She gives her hand to Rudolph.*

RUDOLPH.

Marie! Edward!

EDWARD.

'Tis a good coz!—there, Countess, take him—you have my leave.

COUNT.

And make him happy, as you have made your father.

RUDOLPH (*turning to the Baron.*)

My dear father!

BARON.

Ay, in the dearest sense of the word
A father will I be! here, take him, Countess,
Take him from me—my Rudolph—my true son!
A nobler heart there breathes not in the world!

EDWARD (*waving his cap*).

Joy! my country cousin!

The curtain falls.

THE END.

LONDON
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY-STREET, STRAND.